# INDIA, PAST AND PRESENT;

With Minor Essays on Cognate Subjects.

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BY

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'We must write, even were we to lose the affections of our friends, or destroy our happiness, or our fortune.'—ZIMMERMANN.



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# INDIA: PAST AND PRESENT.

## CHAPTER I.

### ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE BRÁHMAN RACE.

THE primal abode of the Hindus has long been a disputed point with historians and orientalists; and, though modern research has thrown much additional light on the subject, it cannot be said that all the difficulties that encompassed it have yet been cleared away. Founding their theory on comparative philology and a parallelism of languages, several authors have strongly maintained that the Hindus, Persians, Celts, Latins, Greeks, Teutons, and Slavs were all originally of one race, and radiated from the highlands of Central Asia, either to people or to furnish ruling races throughout the earth. Others, again, have as strongly opposed this belief, and designated it a stupendous error, sure to explode on a later day on more certain information than is yet available to us being obtained, justly holding that a coincidence of words and sentences is not, in such matters, a safe and reliable guide. One author goes even to point out that several expressions in the Chinese language agree with those in the Sanskrit used to convey similar ideas,* and yet no one pretends that the Chinese people are derived from the same stock with the Hindus. The disputants are thus even now fairly divided; and while one

* *E.g. Niepán* for *Nirván.*

party maintains that the Hindus have descended to India from the shores of the Caspian, the other contends that India from the beginning of time has been their only home.

As peace-makers between the two parties, we are disposed to accept the conclusion arrived at by Elphinstone, after a review of the arguments urged by both, that there is no reason for thinking that the Hindus ever inhabited any country but their present one, and as little for denying that they may have done so before the earliest trace of their records and traditions. The favourite theory of the hour, however, is an original Central-Asian stock for peopling the best part of the globe—a common Aryan parentage for the Englishman and the Hindu; it is necessary, therefore, to explain how that theory is established. The idea is based on a fancied similitude between the Sanskrit, Persian, Scythian, Celtic, Hellenic, Gothic, and Slavonian languages, which, for that reason, are supposed to have been derived from one original language that was probably common to all the races concerned, when, at some remote period, they formed one people and lived in one common home. The statement as regards the Hindus is, that two branches of this original race, generally known as the Aryan race—namely, the Perso-Aryans and the Indo-Aryans—after having lived for a long time together in Bactria or some other neighbouring place, were sent adrift in opposite directions by a great war which separated them, the Indo-Aryans settling themselves finally on the banks of the Indus. There is nothing improbable in this supposition; it is quite possible that it was so: but it has been significantly pointed out by the opponents of the theory that there is no mention of such migration in any of the Sanskrit books—not even in the most ancient, and that their evidence on the subject by implication is altogether opposed to it. The only documentary evidence appealed to in favour of the idea is that of the Persian books, and their support is, after all, of the feeblest kind. In the first chapter of the *Vendidad*, Áhoormazd, or the Wise Spirit, gives an account of the creation of various

countries by him, the first country named being *Airyana Veijo*, while the fifteenth is called *Haptu Hindu*, which is identified with the Punjáb. This has been very forcedly construed as describing, step by step, the diffusion of the Aryans over the earth. In point of fact it does not do so, for the text does not speak of any migrations; it simply names the countries which were known to each other at the time. Much has also been attempted to be made of the fact that the Hindus frequently allude in their books to a sacred region and the seat of the gods existing somewhere towards the mountains of the north. This doubtless is so; but it is no proof whatever of a foreign origin, for the Greeks similarly considered Olympus to be the seat of their gods, and all who looked at the Himálayás would naturally select them as fit abodes for their deities. Besides that, the mountains were the places of refuge at the time of the Deluge, and were on that account also properly regarded by the earlier races with the greatest veneration. Another so-called proof is that both the Hindus and the Persians call themselves 'Aryans.' In the books of the Hindus the word *Arya*, which means 'excellent,' is made applicable to the people of *Aryaverta*, the country lying between the Himálayá and the Vindhyá mountains. Similarly, the ancient Persians called themselves *Airya*, or 'honourable,' a designation that was known to Herodotus. But resemblances of this sort mean nothing, as being only the results of the same tendencies of the human mind working out their natural results similarly in different places. Both the Hindus and the Persians, perhaps, found themselves equally at the outset encircled by other races whom they knew less favourably, and from whom they were anxious to be distinguished; and to this end they both took to themselves a name coined for the occasion, which, from their contiguity to each other, they adopted in common. That the races were distinct may still be insisted upon from the marked difference that existed between their characters in several respects. The Hindus, for instance, were scholars of high culture and taste from

the time of our first knowledge of them; but the Persians were never anything beyond soldiers and politicians. This wide disparity between them, which was observable from the earliest times, remained unaltered for ages. If the races were derived from the same stock, when and how did the difference arise?

A general similarity between the two races may, nevertheless, still be conceded; but it was such only as leads to the inference that, at the earliest eras, they probably either lived as near neighbours, or corresponded with each other freely on neutral ground. The Bráhmans, or *devatás,* (they are still so called in India) dwelt in *Arya-verta,* while the *asoors,* or *áhoors,* resided in *Áhooryá,* which may be accepted as being the same with Assyria. This would leave the intermediate countries of Persia, Media, and Bactria as debatable land on which they met, where each party probably maintained its outposts, and where they largely intermixed until their final separation. The age when all this happened is too remote to be precisely determined, or anything in connection with it to be authoritatively affirmed. Pictet assumes that the era of Aryan civilisation commenced at not less than B.C. 3000, which carries the date some centuries anterior to the Flood. At this time, all races of men on the earth—or, at all events, all races living near each other—would naturally be united by a general bond of similarity of manners and languages, a common stock of beliefs and traditions, and a sentiment of natural brotherhood; and, perhaps, this was all the affinity that really existed between the Hindus and the Persians. What was common was necessarily similar in both; but what was not common differed in the widest degree.

Having agreed, however, to Elphinstone's decision, we are not averse to accept the current belief that the Hindus did come to India from Central Asia, probably by the passes of Afghánistán and Cashmere, either as conquerors or as fugitives, or as both. The acceptance of this theory necessarily implies that of another—namely, that in their

original country they were disturbed by some great schism, which parted them for good from the other branches of their race. The *Satapatha Bráhmana* says that the gods and the *asoors* were both descended from *Prajápati*, and contended with each other, because the *asoors* having constructed cities of gold, silver, and iron, the gods became envious and rose up against them, and smote their cities and conquered the world. Another version of the story, in the same *Bráhmana*, tells us that the gods were worsted at first, and the *asoors*, thinking that the world was theirs only, commenced to divide it amongst themselves, when their opponents, with Vishnu at their head, proceeded to claim a share. The *asoors* grudgingly assented to give as much only as Vishnu, who was a dwarf, could lie upon, whereupon Vishnu, under a sacrifice, expanded all over the earth. This latter version is that repeated by the Pouránic story of Vishnu and Bali. All the stories agree in recording a forcible partition, which caused the first war in the world, which may be called the Áhoor war—an historical event of as great importance almost as the Deluge itself. It was known to all the ancient nations as the war between the gods and the giants. We are accustomed to the frequent complaint that there is no vestige of history in India, and yet our only accounts of the oldest generations of men and of the first great war waged between them are those to be obtained from the *Veds* and the *Zendávestá*—unfortunately, however, to be gleaned only by deduction and inference.

The *Sibylline Leaves* say that the Titanian war commenced in the tenth generation after the Deluge, that it lasted for ten years, and that it was the first war in which mankind were engaged. The dates thus fixed cannot, however, be accurate, as the accounts gleanable from the Hindu Shástras and the *Zendávestá* go much further back than the tenth generation after the Deluge, to commence with. In the *Matsya Purán*, Menu or Satyavratá speaks to Janárdhan, recognised in the fish-form assumed by him, as the 'slayer of the *asoors*;' and, as the fish preserved

Satyavratá from destruction by the Flood, the inference is clear that the Flood was, in the days of the *Matsya Purán*, regarded as having occurred after the Áhoor war. The commencement of the war has been estimated by scholars generally at about B.C. 2400, and it was fought out almost entirely in Persia, a country not materially affected by the Flood. The fag-end of the struggle only corresponds with the first dawn of history, namely, the days of Ninus and Semiramis, of which the accounts are so hazy. The annals of Assyria record that Ninus collected a large army of *áhoors*, and attacked the Bráhman outposts in Bactria, and that the Bráhmans, after having made a spirited resistance, were eventually defeated, mainly in consequence of the courage and genius of Semiramis. The *áhoor* lady subsequently became queen-regent of the giants, and, pursuing her former policy, pressed the war to the home of the *devatás*, their outposts in Bactria having been intermediately abandoned. This was the great war fought between Semiramis and Sthábarpati, or Stabrobates, in which three and a half millions of *áhoors* are said to have been pitted against nearly four millions of the *devatás*. All accounts mention that the *devatás* were successful and the *áhoors* beaten back, though it does not appear that any attempt was made by the former, after their victory, to reoccupy Bactria, as nothing beyond desultory raids in that direction are subsequently spoken of.

The quotation given from the *Satapatha Bráhmana* does not indicate that the Áhoor war was a religious war, but a comparison of the *Veds* with the *Zendávestá* clearly shows that it was so. That the religions of the *áhoors* and the Bráhmans were not dissimilar at the outset is to be gathered from the facts that they both worshipped some gods in common, as, for instance, Varuna and Áhoormazd, whose characters agreed, and Mitra and Mithra, who agreed in name; that many important ceremonies, as laid down in both, were virtually the same; and that the *Soma* of the one and the *Haoma* of the other were both religious drinks, and in both religions the name of a god. The sub-

sequent rupture between them is, similarly, to be inferred from the degradation of some gods by one party who were highly revered by the other, and by the billingsgate exchanged between them even in the adoption of names. The *devas* were gods according to the Hindus, but the *daevas* (dives) were evil spirits to the Persians; Yima was a fortunate monarch according to the latter, but the former regarded Yama as king of the dead; Indra was king of heaven according to the *Veds*, but the *Zendávestá* declared Andra to be a fallen angel; Áryaman was the Hindu regent of light, while Áhriman was the Satan of the other side; Siva was a Vedic god, though not of much importance, but Sarva of the Persians was a wicked spirit. The differences were so markedly antagonistic that they cannot but be attributed to an open breach between the two factions. The *Veds* go so far as to call the *asoors* thieves and robbers, and the *Zendávestá* retaliates by calling the *daeves* drunkards. The quarrel was apparently implacable on both sides; and the two races, after their separation, sat down to record that implacability in their respective codes of religion, the *Veds* being the records on one side, and the *Zendávestá* on the other.

The Bráhmans then, are the *devatás* of the *Veds* and the *dives* of the *Zendávestá*, who, after their separation from the other Aryans, went through their own special development on the banks of the Indus. The country first occupied by them was called *Sapta Sindhava*, or the land of the seven rivers, which was identical with the *Haptu Hindu* of the *Vendidad*. Here, they had on the one side of them the advance-guard of the *áhoors*, who occupied Persia, and on the other the *dasyas*, the aborigines of India, constant fighting with both of whom had for a long time to be maintained. Hence, in the Sanskrit, the Áhoor war is frequently confounded with the wars with the *dasyas*; and both the *áhoors* and the *dasyas* are promiscuously designated evil-spirits and spirits of darkness. That the Bráhmans several times invaded the countries to their west is clearly traceable from the *Veds*;

and it may further be inferred from them that these invasions were, for the most part, unsuccessful, though some great victories are especially noted, *e.g.*, that obtained by Deva Dása, a vassal *dasya*, as his name implies. The final result was that the *devatá* population of Persia, Media, and Bactria were obliged to congregate in the Punjáb, and then push eastward and southward to displace the *dasyas*. The total number of the Hindu deities is usually given at three hundred and thirty millions. By this is probably meant the entire *devatá* population (much exaggerated of course) that poured into India after the wars of Ninus and Semiramis, all of whom being *devatás* by race became in time gods of the country into which they crowded, and who, remembering their quarrel with the *áhoors*, ignored their connection with them, and upheld their identity with the Bráhmans settled in *Sapta Sindhava* from an earlier date. This explains why the Shástras do not refer to a prior residence of the Bráhmans in any other country besides India. It at the same time justifies the new theory that the Bráhmans came to India from the west, for of course a great portion of them did so when the outposts in Media, Bactria, and Persia were withdrawn. The diffusion of the race throughout India after this was gradual but steady, and is traceable, step by step, in the Shástras. The first move was from the Indus to the Seraswati, a river now lost in the sands; and this accounts for the tract lying between the Cággár (Drishádwati) and the Seraswati being named by Menu *Brahmáverta*, or frequented by the gods. This, as the first land occupied by the *devatás* after their disruption with the nations of the west, had the highest degree of sanctity attached to it; and also, probably, because it was the place where the Bráhmanical institutions were matured. A wider space is called *Brahmárshi* in the *Institutes*, and comprehended nearly the whole country generally known as Hindustán Proper, over which the progressive spirit of the race was next extended. Still further expansion is implied by the term *Aryaverta* being applied to all the territory lying between

the Himálayá and Vindhyá mountains; and, in accordance with this text and that cited before it, we actually find that, by the age of the *Rámáyana*, the banks of the Jumná and the Ganges were fully occupied, and by the age of the *Mahábhárut* both Anga and Banga, up to the banks of the Brahmapootra. From the time of Semiramis to that of the *Mahábhárut* the interval comprises a period of about six hundred years, and within this era all the country from the Indus to the Brahmapootra appears to have been completely Bráhmanized. But even this field was insufficient to accommodate conveniently the three hundred and thirty millions of *devatás* and their descendants for whom room had in time to be made, and so it was advisedly laid down by Menu that every place where the antelope grazes in natural freedom is fit for sacrifice, that is, that the whole peninsula, down to Cape Comorin, was worthy of being occupied; and we actually find that, long before Alexander's invasion, the civilisation of the Bráhmans had traversed the entire length of the peninsula and crossed over to Ceylon.

It is clear at the same time, however, that all the places named were largely peopled by the indigenous races of India before the Bráhmans from the Punjáb went forward to subdue them, for in the *Rig Ved* iron cities and fortifications are mentioned as having belonged to the *dasyas*; and we also read that Indra demolished a hundred cities of stone in fighting on behalf of Deva Dása, the liberal *dasya* to whom we have alluded. We usually receive all these narrations as poetical fables; but it may be that they contain an undercurrent of historical truth which only requires a little careful handling to be clearly developed. The regular migration of mankind by divine appointment does not appear to have ever reached India, which was peopled indigenously, as all countries of the world probably were, at the outset. One race in it, the Bráhmans, who originally occupied the Punjáb—possibly by immigration—was afterwards enormously expanded by accession of extraneous reinforcements as well as by natural multiplication,

and came in time to spread throughout the whole peninsula, from the Himálayás to Ceylon, trampling over the rights of the indigenous races, and levelling their cities and fortifications with the dust; and the changes thus introduced fully explain the entire enigma of Bráhmanism, Buddhism, and Caste. What the Norman was to the Saxon, that was the Aryan Bráhman to the *dasya*. For a long time, with the conqueror's usual pride, the Bráhmans designated the *dasyas* monkeys, bears, and *rákshases*, though there is no doubt that they borrowed much of their civilisation from at least some of the races they traduced. But, as the fusion of the Normans and the Saxons eventually created the English race, even so the fusion of the Bráhmans and the *dasyas* formed the Pouránic Hindus, after they had travelled through the phases distinguished by the names of Vedism, Buddhism, and so forth. All the systems and institutions over which we stumble in wading through the ancient records of the country seem to have been mere religious and civil transitions called forth by the natural development of the Bráhman race and the convulsions it gave rise to. The intermixture of the Bráhmans with the conquered races was necessarily gradual, and created new creeds and new aspirations at every step, which not only altered their own character, but also that of their books and teachings. The *Veds* are not all equally old, and do not all uphold the same system of religion. The reason is obvious; they underwent the same changes that the Bráhman character passed through: and this progression, drawn out to later times, accounts fully for the many civil and social revolutions we read of.

## CHAPTER II.

### VEDISM; ITS DIFFERENT PHASES.

THE most important question which demands solution at the outset is—'What was the religion of the Bráhmans before the Áhoor war?' This can scarcely be answered correctly even from the *Veds*. It is only to be determined by inference, and an examination of what we find in the *Veds* and what we do not find in them. The *Veds* are four in number; but one bears an equivocal character. The old Hindu writers always speak of three *Veds*, namely, the *Rig*, *Yajur*, and *Sám Veds*. The *Atharván* was first raised to an equal rank with them by the *Puráns*, which then proceeded to speak of themselves and the *Itihásee* as a fifth *Ved*. Of the first three, the *Sám Ved* has been found to be nothing more than a recast of the *Rig Ved*, though containing some verses which cannot be found in the latter, and the *Yajur Ved* to be only a collection of sacrificial formulas, both in prose and verse. It follows therefore, that both the *Yajur* and the *Sám Veds* were composed after the *Rig Ved*, and that the latter constituted the original *Ved*, and furnishes the most primitive representation of Hinduism. Shall we say that the religion of the *Rig Ved* was the religion of the Bráhmans before the Áhoor war?

But every portion of a *Ved* is not equally old. Each *Ved* is divided into two parts, namely, the *Sanhitas* and the *Bráhmanas*. The word *Sanhita* means a 'collection,' and the *Sanhitas* of the *Veds* accordingly comprise all the

hymns, prayers, and invocations uttered in praise of the gods celebrated in them; while the *Bráhmanas*, which form the general head of divinity, include regulations to explain the ceremonies, rites, and forms of religion, and have appended to them theological treatises, called *Aranyakás* and *Upanishads*, which record the speculations and spiritual aspirations of the devout. The original *Veds*, therefore, are the *Sanhitas*, out of which the *Bráhmanas* and the *Upanishads* were derived; and of these the most ancient were of course the *Sanhitas* of the *Rig Ved*, since that *Ved* was anterior to the others. Was the religion of the ante-Áhoor-war-period then, identical with that of the hymns of the *Rig Ved?*

The Vedic hymns are not all the products of one single age, and in their own selves bear evidence of different stages of development, the oldest being almost childlike in their simplicity, while the later compositions contain intellectual and spiritual yearnings of a higher character. The Vedic age has accordingly, for convenience of reference, been divided into four distinct periods, namely, (1) the *Ch'handa*, the era of the oldest hymns of the *Rig Ved;* (2) the *Mantra*, the era of the later hymns; (3) the *Bráhmana*, when rituals and abstract theology were foisted into the religious code and the *Upanishads* were written; and (4) the *Sutra*, which introduced the *Smriti* stage, when the Shástras commenced to be *written*, as distinguished from those promulgated during the three earlier eras, all of which were *Sruti*, or uttered by God. The oldest of these periods scarcely goes back to the commencement of the Áhoor war, though it is possible that some of the earliest and simplest hymns of the *Rig Ved* may have existed at that time. Of that, however, we have no proof. Even if we had, the question as regards the religion of the Hindus *before that period* would still remain unanswered.

Our own belief is that all the old religions of the earth started with the idea of God to begin with, which was spontaneously caught by those who were nearest to God

in point of time, but that, the mind being then profoundly ignorant, the truth was not grasped with sufficient firmness to be long retained. On this supposition we conclude that the original religion of the Hindus was a monotheism of natural growth, which eventually dwindled down to a childlike playing with the divine attributes as manifested in nature, which we find to have been the religion of the oldest hymns. Between the age of the hymns and the creation of the race a wide chasm must have intervened, during which the Áhoor wars were fought, caused probably by the very defection from the First Cause, the belief in whom has been assumed. Some traces of this monotheism may, we think, be read in the *Rig Ved*, though they are undoubtedly of a very vague and rudimentary character. There is, also, something like regret observable in several places for the loss of the great idea, accompanied, as it were, by a straining effort to regain it. In support of this belief we would particularly draw attention to the hymn in the *Rig Ved*, translated by Max Müller, which harps so sweetly and persistently on the question, 'Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifices?' and also to that other prayer every stanza of which concludes with the line, 'Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!' There is nothing purer or more beautiful than either of them in the Psalms of David, and no one who has read them can have failed to perceive the idea of one Supreme God echoed, as it were, in both, which leaves behind the impression that it was yet better known to the race at some anterior period of their existence. The general drift of the *Sanhitas*, however, is towards the worship of the great objects of external nature; against which, probably, the Perso-Aryans protested, which caused the separation and the wars. There is no doubt that the religion of the ancient Persians retained more of the spiritual element than the *Veds*, even though it did not altogether discard nature-worship. The traditions of an earlier age when God was all in all also to the Hindus, were common in the olden times. The *Rámáyana*, referring to them, says that in

that age 'there were no gods, *dánavas*, *gandharvas*, and *rákshases*, no buying or selling. The *Veds* were not classed—no *Sáman*, *Rig*, or *Yajur*. There was righteousness all over the world; no disease, no decline of organs from old age; no malice, weeping, pride, or deceit; and no contentions.' The age of wars and contentions followed, and after that the age of the *Mantras*, if not that of the *Ch'handas* also. The later *Mantras* are supposed to have been composed at some time between B.C. 2000 and 1400, and the *Bráhmanas* at between B.C. 1400 and 1200. At this latter date the misunderstanding of the old faith was so complete that the *Bráhmanas* do not seem even to understand the hymns which they profess to elucidate. A wider estrangement from, a more complete rupture with, the older Aryan faith was the necessary consequence. Monotheism, then, may be taken as the starting-point of Aryan history. The Perso-Aryans adhered to it, while the Hindus, after playing with it in diverse ways, threw it overboard.

The first phase of the Hindu religion—that is, of the religion adopted by the Bráhmans after their separation from the *asoors*—is what we find in the *Rig Ved*. It would not be right to call this belief monotheistic, for the original idea with which the race started had already become clouded by a delirium of fervency and poetry, which appealed, not to the One God, but to the powers of nature personified. There is hardly any manifestation of nature that was not worshipped by the *rishis*. The sky, the dawn, the sun, the clouds for-ever-changing, the rain, the storm, water, food, wine, and fire—all these were incomprehensible forces to the simple-minded, and received laudation on reverent knee. The elements in India are always to be seen in their most sublime and terror-inspiring attitudes, and in an impulsive age they were the only powers invoked. Professor Wilson expressly says that it is doubtful if the authors of the hymns entertained any belief in a Creator or Ruler of the universe. We give them full credit for the exalted ideas, feelings, and aspira-

tions expressed by them; but it would not be true to assert that their worship ever rose—except in a very undistinguishable form—above the worship of the great objects by which they were surrounded. The deities principally invoked were Agni, Indra, Mitra, Varuna, etc., for the plain reason that the *rishis* were mainly husbandmen, much dependent on the favour of rain, warmth, and fresh breezes for successful cultivation. The first form of worship was apparently confined to the adoration of the elements only; but to this was soon added that of the stars and planets, which raised the sun, as chief of the heavenly host, to the significant position indicated by the *Gáyatri* still repeated by the Bráhmans: 'Om! Earth! Sky! Heavens! We meditate on the adorable light of that divine ruler, the Sun; may it direct our intellects!' They raised no temples, nor made unto themselves graven images in those days, to represent any of these powers; we find each of them addressed by turns as the Supreme Ruler, Agni being called 'the ruler of the universe,' Indra 'the strongest of all,' Surjya 'the divine ruler,' and Soma 'he that conquers every one;' and there was no competition between them as existed between the gods of a later age. But we search in vain for any direct reference to the One God who had been previously worshipped, or even to a God superior to the rest; and in sheer despair we are content to accept the interpretation of Yaska, that all the numerous names to which adoration was offered were resolvable into the different titles of Agni, whose place was on the earth, Váyu or Indra, whose place was in the air, and Surjya, whose place was in the heavens; and that those three names again were resolvable into that of God. 'That which is one,' says the *Rig Ved*, 'the wise call it many;' and, similarly, Yaska observes: 'Owing to the greatness of the Deity, one soul is celebrated by the *rishis* as if it were many.' But this is only a forced explanation; and, besides that, the mere admission of a superior god is not monotheism.

The great deities of the Ch'handa and Mantra periods

were Indra and Varuna, and after them Agni and Surjya. Indra was the lord of the firmament, Varuna of space, Agni of fire, and Surjya of the sun. The hymns addressed to them are all of the simplest kind, and they overflow with the most endearing and reverential affection. There is no poetry simpler or more fervent than that to be found in them; no attempt at display is made in them; they are merely genuine outpourings of the heart, expressed in such words as came up to the lips of themselves, the divinities applied to being addressed as living existences, to whom each father of a family offered his adoration. The head of each family was the priest in his own house: he kindled the sacred fire with his own hands; praised the gods, or solicited their aid or forbearance; offered them choice articles of food, such as barley, milk, butter, and the *soma* juice, through the medium of fire; and prayed for the destruction of his sins, and for immortality as the recompense of his devotion. But he prayed not to the One God without a second, whom he had ceased to remember: something that represented that One God to his visual organ was the object to which he appealed.

The *rishis* worshipped the objects of nature as living existences, offered their own sacrifices and devotions to them, and performed their own domestic rites. This was the first or patriarchal development of the Vedic faith. Their descendants, in course of time, came in contact with other races, and naturally claimed superiority over them. The original usages of the Vedic era had therefore, in their age, to be considerably altered and modified. The changes which came thus to be introduced are fully explained by the Vedic divisions of *Sanhitas*, *Bráhmanas*, and *Upanishads*. The first additions to the old lyrical songs, which represented the patriarchal era, were the dogmatical ritual commentaries called the Bráhmanas, by which the householder was made to resign his place of privilege to the *Poorohit* especially selected to chant the sacred hymns. The geographical development of the race having widened, the worship of the gods was made to assume a greater

significance to mark the separation of the *devatás* from the aborigines. This could only be effected by the introduction of rituals and fixed sacrifices, and they were unhesitatingly put in, together with a multitude of details that necessitated the creation of a sacerdotal class. The word 'Bráhmana' simply signifies 'prayer;' and those were now so named who occupied themselves exclusively in prayers. In the patriarchal period every householder prayed on behalf of himself and his family, and was a Bráhman. But the wider development that followed made the work too tedious for the householder to discharge. The *devatás*, therefore, who still occupied themselves in this way, continued to be called Bráhmans, while other duties and other distinguishing epithets were assigned to the rest of the race, and to the other classes which were simultaneously created. The collective doctrine of sacrifices was also, for its ritual connection with prayers, called the *Bráhmanas* of the *Veds.*

Besides these, other changes were introduced by the additions made intermediately to the *Sanhitas*, or collections of hymns and prayers. All the hymns were not equally old; several centuries intervened between the oldest and the latest: and considerable were the modifications effected in religious beliefs and ideas by the additions thus made. The oldest of the Vedic gods were Mitra and Varuna, both of whom were also worshipped by the ancient Persians. Indra superseded Mitra in India, apparently, after the termination of the Áhoor war, for he is only mentioned as conquering the *dasyas*, not the *áhoors.* 'Thou didst subdue the *dasyas*, and gave the people to the Arya;' 'thou hast subjected all the distracted *dasya* peoples to the Arya;' such is the burden of all the hymns addressed to him; and what is true of Indra is also true of several other gods. The deposition or supersession of deities is one of the principal features of the religious transitions in India. It was most prominent during the Pouránic era, but was far from being unusual in the Vedic times. It clearly marks different stages in the progress of

the same people, and paved the way for the convulsions which were caused by Buddhism and the philosophers.

The Vedic gods were altogether thirty-three in number, and the *Satapatha Bráhmana* explains that they comprised eight Vásus, eleven Rudras, twelve Ádityas, and the Heaven and the Earth, otherwise called Dyaus and Prithivi. Apart from these were counted the Aswinis and the Máruts; and texts are not wanting which increased the number yet further. The word 'Bruhmu' occurs once only in the earlier portion of the *Rig Ved*, as a name of Indra. The names of Vishnu and Rudra are more frequently repeated; but they figured generally as unimportant divinities. Umá was known as Ambiká, an insignificant deity. The position of Lakshmi was yet more indefinite, the *Atharván Ved* pronouncing her to be an unholy deity, or rather that there were a plurality of Lakshmis, of whom some were good and some bad; and the two greatest elements of later Hinduism—the *Trimurti* and the *Lingam*—were altogether unknown. A triad of Agni, Váyu, and Surjya was recognised, but no *Trimurti*. The *rishis* praised and exalted the powers of nature as conscious and volitional agents, but gave them no outward form; nor did they acquire any till the age of the *Puráns*. The *rishis*, in worshipping them, did not even acknowledge their own inferiority to them. They believed themselves to be independent of the gods, and gifted with an inherent capacity of raising themselves to an equality in power with them, or even to a superiority over them, which Indra achieved; and this we may receive as a distinct assurance that, subsequent to the earliest period, men (ancestors) began to be deified by the Bráhmans along with the powers of nature, which in time helped the *Puráns* to create the huge fabric they set up. All creatures came from Prajápati, including the gods. The gods and the *asoors* were originally on a footing of equality. Their derivation, in fact, was almost, though not precisely, the same—the gods being the children of Áditi, the primeval mother, and the *asoors* of Diti, her

rival in beauty and worth. The gods became superior only from continence and austerity; and there was nothing to hinder men from raising themselves in the same way to an equality of rank with them.

This was the mythological phase of Vedism; but there is a better one to notice, namely, the last. The simple poetry of the Ch'handa and Mantra periods was substituted by the legends of the Bráhmana period after an interval of about eight hundred or a thousand years, when the hymn-singers dwindled down to sacrifice-celebrants. But this did not satisfy the longings of the human mind; it rather gave birth to a revulsion of feelings—a strenuous effort to go back to the First Cause. The deep truth latent in all religions was now again sedulously sought for, and traced. The name of Bruhmu is referred to in the *Sám Ved* as a 'beautiful glory,' to which everything that is brightest and everything that is deepest belongs. It is more mystically alluded to in all the four *Veds* in the following words respectively: 'This is Bruhmu,' 'I am Bruhmu,' 'That art thou,' 'The soul is Bruhmu.' The *White Yajur Ved* goes further, and explicitly declares him to be—'the god who pervades all regions,' 'the first-born,' 'in whom this world is absorbed,' and 'to whom all creatures owe their being.' Besides these texts, there is the celebrated hymn in the *Rig Ved* upon which the *Vedánta* is based: 'Then there was no entity nor nonentity; no world, nor sky, nor aught above it; nothing anywhere, in the happiness of any one involving or involved. Death was not, nor then was immortality. But *That'* (interpreted to mean the Supreme Being) 'breathed without afflation, single with Swad'dha—her who is sustained within him. Other than him nothing existed. Darkness there was; the universe was enveloped in darkness, and was undistinguishable like waters,' etc. The idea which these passages suggested was now recalled with alacrity, and was worked upon till it became the basis of the *Upanishads*.

The return to the original idea of God may be dated

from this period, the age of the *Upanishads*. But the 'beautiful glory,' as the *Sám Ved* calls it, was unfortunately enveloped in deep speculation, bordering on mysticism; the efforts to regain the lost faith got entangled in the meshes of a misdirected philosophy. The absolute of the *Upanishads* is the neuter Bruhmu—the root of all creatures, their resting-place, their foundation, and all that; but still a being who is represented in the *Upanishads* themselves to be 'like one asleep.' The *Upanishads* are ordinarily counted as fifty in number; and the Vedantists assign peculiar respect to them, as being the last and therefore the most matured expression of faith of the Vedic age. They are, perhaps, the only parts of the Veds now read. But the faith they introduced was scarcely more satisfying than that of the *Sanhitas*. The fervent simplicity of the hymns was given up for a speculative theism which did not come within the grasp of consciousness; the sublimest conceptions of the Deity were disfigured by being commingled with the abstrusest dogmas of metaphysics. No phase of the Vedic faith, therefore, supplied what the human heart stood in need of—a provident and sympathetic ruler of the universe.

The morality of the *Veds* is more undeniable than their theism. Even the hymns of the Ch'handa period, if they are childish, are not impure. Notwithstanding the designation of *Sruti* applied to them, the *rishis* distinctly claim their authorship, and—David-like—apply to the gods addressed for a variety of temporal blessings—such as strength, long-life, offspring, riches, cattle, food, rain, and victory; but they also pray for the enlightenment of their minds, forgiveness of their offences, and admission into paradise. The references to a future and immortal life are very distinct. 'Place me, O Purified! in that imperishable and unchangeable world where perpetual light and glory are found. Make me immortal where King Yama dwells, where the sanctuary of the sky exists, where the great waters flow.' This, it appears to us, was a very exalted aspiration for the age in which it was expressed. We observe, in passing, that

the fondness for water is frequently repeated, and that water, or *Áppa*, is, as the primitive element, identified with God, or Náráyana, which would seem to indicate that the Hindus did not emigrate from a colder climate than India. Unfortunately, we at the same time find a fondness expressed for strong drink, which strengthens the argument on the opposite side to the same extent. 'We have drunk the Soma, we have become immortal, we have entered into light. What can an enemy now do to us?' *Surá-pánam* is also spoken of besides *Soma-pánam*, that is, dram-drinking as distinguished from wine-drinking; and in the *Satapatha Bráhmana*, a son of Tvashtri is represented as having three mouths, one of which was *Soma-drinker*, another *Surá-drinker*, and a third the consumer of other things; two inlets for wine and spirits, against one for all other articles of food! But, for all that, we need not conclude that the ancient Hindus were vicious to the extent that their partiality for strong drink would indicate. The juice of the *Soma* plant apart, the other religious offerings were all extremely innocent; and it may be safely concluded that the ordinary food of the Bráhmans was no richer in that age than it is at present. They called themselves *Arya*, or respectable, and were so in every sense of the word, the fathers of families living the life of *rishis*, or penitents. As an exceptional case only, we read in the *Rig Ved* of Yama holding a dialogue with his twin-sister Yamuna for the purpose of seducing her; but we read there also that she rejected his solicitations with indignant expostulation. The morality of the Shástras must have been yet further improved in the age of the *Upanishads*, which enjoined constant meditation on Bruhmu and the extinction of all consciousness of outward things as the only means for securing salvation. The control of the appetites and passions was necessarily implied, and for it the meditation of the divine nature was expressly prescribed. The ethics of Vedism, therefore, appears at all times to have been unimpeachable, however much its idea of the godhead might have been defective.

## CHAPTER III.

### BUDDHISM; OLD AND LATER.

THE first resolute protest against the nature-worship of the *Veds* was that of Buddhism, which originated with the philosophers, as its very name—the religion of intelligence—implies. The intellectual portion of the Hindus revolted early against the principles of faith inculcated by the Vedic hymns, and did not hesitate to repudiate them. It is not, as has been generally held, that Buddhism warred against Mythology only, and rejected it. Buddhism went much further, for it warred against Vedism in its integrity, and ignored it.

The age of Buddhism has not yet been precisely ascertained; but it is not correct to say that it commenced with Sákya Muni, in the sixth century before Christ. The religion promulgated by Sákya has now existed for two thousand and five hundred years, but the older phases of the faith were at least a thousand years more ancient, or perhaps earlier still, though the roots then lay hid under ground, and the heresy was yet a sapling. The question—'Which is more ancient, Vedism or Buddhism?' has been raised and discussed; but it may be admitted that it does not really arise, for there is no doubt that the first religion of India was the worship of nature and the elements. There is as little doubt, however, that Buddhism was almost coeval with that worship, which in the very first ages the philosophers refused to accept; and it is more than probable that the heresy was inaugurated by Boodh,

or Búddha, the son of Soma and grandson of Atri, that is, with the very commencement of the Lunar race. In the home of the Bráhmans there were renegades and *áhoors* who had managed to enter India along with their adversaries; and we actually read in later accounts of resident *asoors*, such as Rávana, Sisupála, Jarásandhá, Bánasur, and others. What so natural then, but that these should combine to set up their own religion among themselves in the heart of the enemy's camp? This would make Buddhism at once a philosophical, religious, and political protest against Vedism; and this it doubtless was from the commencement. The invasions of the Scythic races, if distinct from those of the Aryans, might also account for its introduction; and from an historical point of view it does seem as if the original Buddha and Oghuz Khán were the same. The precise date of neither can now be given; but the *Padma Purán* contains a passage which clearly affirms that Buddhism was older than Vedantism, that is, anterior to the era of the *Aranyakás* and *Upanishads*. Says Maháderva to Párvati: 'Listen, goddess, while I declare to you the works of darkness. The *Saiva* system was declared by myself. The *Vaiseshika*, *Nyaya*, and *Sankhya* systems were declared by sages penetrated by my power. The *Mimánsá* was composed by Jaimani, on atheistic principles; so too the abominable *Charváká* doctrine was declared by Vrihaspati; while Vishnu, in the form of Buddha, promulgated the false system of *Buddhism*, to effect the destruction of the *daityas*. Myself, O goddess! then uttered in the Kali Yug the false doctrines of the *Vedánta*.' This quite supports the view we have taken that some of the *asoors* or *daityas* did settle in India, and in doing so brought with them the germs of that religion which was afterwards expanded all over the eastern world, from Kamschatka to Ceylon.

The account which the Buddhas give of their faith is not unaccordant with the theory above explained. 'In the beginning, when all was perfect void and the firmaments were not, then Ádi Buddha, the stainless, was revealed in

flame.' 'He in whom are the three *gunas*, who is the *Mahámurti* and the *Viswarupa*, became manifest—the self-existent great Buddha, the Ádináth, the Maheshwara.' 'He is the cause of all existence in the three worlds, and the cause of their well-being. From his profound meditation was the universe produced.' 'He is self-existent, the Iswara, the sum of perfection, the infinite; void of members and passions. All things are types of him, but he has no type; he is the form of all things, and yet formless himself.' 'He is the essence of all essences; the sum of all perfections; infinite, eternal, and without members or passions.' 'What tongue can utter thy praise, thou of whose being there is no cause but thy own will?'

Their godhead thus defined, the Buddhas affirm that, besides this Ádi-Buddha, there are five *Dhyáni* or celestial Buddhas, who were brought into existence by the desire of Ádi-Buddha, and who in their turn called forth five others, the *Buddha-Swatas*, or the sons of the Buddhas, by whom the universe was created. But the design of Buddhism was not to teach cosmogony, and hence the *Mánushi* or human Buddhas, who were called forth to develop the religion, come at once to the foreground. 'Ádi-Buddha was never seen; he is merely light.' The *Dhyáni* Buddhas and the *Buddha-Swatas* are like him; they created the universe, but, that done, have remained quiescent ever since: and hence it devolved on the *Mánushi* Buddhas to undertake the instruction of mankind. The commencement of this series of instructors is very ancient, as several of them are said to have lived in the *Satya Yug*, the first or golden age. Their number is variously given from seven to thirty; but most authorities set it down at twenty-five, and give the names as follows: (1) Dipánkara, (2) Kondona, (3) Mangala, (4) Sumana, (5) Revata, (6) Sabhita, (7) Anomadarsi, (8) Padama, (9) Nárada, (10) Padamattára, (11) Sumeda, (12) Sujáta, (13) Priyadarsi, (14) Atthadarsi, (15) Dharmadarsi, (16) Sid'dhártha, (17) Tissoo, (18) Phussoo, (19) Wopássi, (20) Sikhi, (21) Wessábhu, (22) Kákutsanda, (23) Konágamma, (24) Kasyápa, and

(25) Sákya. The identity of these names with those of sages mentioned in the Bráhman records cannot be established in every case; but it may perhaps be taken for granted that the first, Dipánkara, which means 'lightmaker,' was the same with Boodh, the son of the 'Moon,' from whom the commencement of Buddhism may be dated. The wars between the Solar and Lunar races were probably the very first wars waged between the Bráhmans and the Buddhas, and the first overthrow of Buddhism seems to have been signalized by the triumphs of Parusrám and Rámchandra. The religion was revived in the age of the *Mahábhárut*, simultaneously by Jarásandhá at Magadha, Kangsa at Mathoorá, and Naraka at Banga, with all of whom Krishna fought in vindication of the Bráhman cause till they were overthrown. Nay, it is doubtful if even the sanguinary war of the *Mahábhárut* was not a war between the Bráhmans and the Buddhists, the former being represented by Krishna and the latter by Duryodhon, though Buddhism did not die out a second time till the age of Ripoonjaya of Magadha, in B.C. 900. It was next revived by Sákya in B.C. 588, after which it fluctuated till the time of Vindusára and Asoka, the last of whom placed it on its firmest basis.

If the Bráhmans did not understand chronology the Buddhists did so still less, and hence the history of their faith cannot be very precisely traced, nor even its landmarks determined. There is no doubt, however, that it existed long before the era of Sákya; and if any evidence of this were wanted that of Fa Hian, the Chinese traveller, is conclusive. He says that, when he visited India, he found one sect in it which acknowledged the Buddhas anterior to Sákya, but rejected him; and all over India, though writers differ as to the number of Buddhas who preceded Sákya, no one maintains that there were none. The Buddhists affirm that all these Buddhas taught the same doctrines which Sákya, or the Buddha *par excellence*, was the first to record and widely promulgate. They did not originate the doctrines, for, like the *Sruti* of the Bráh-

mans, the Buddha *sutras* were all uttered by Ádi-Buddha, or God. The *Mánushi* Buddhas merely passed them on, one from another, till Sákya 'reduced the words to order;' so that he acted towards them simply as Vyasa did towards the *Veds*, brought together and recorded what had been floating about from mouth to mouth for ages. The *Veds* were classified and recorded in the fourteenth or fifteenth century before Christ; but Buddhism was only orally known in that age. It was nevertheless known very extensively, for philosopher after philosopher had maintained and promulgated its essential principles; namely, that existence is identical with misery, that the cause of misery is attachment to earthly things, and that to set the mind free from this attachment ought to be the chief object of life. Sákya's teachings are based on these fundamental ideas, which are to be found at random in the pages of the *Matsya*, *Vishnu*, *Bhágabat*, *Garura*, and other *Purúns*, in which the name of Buddha is also mentioned. In the legacy of precepts which Sákya left, there was therefore nothing new. They were all older at least than the *Puráns* named, and the *Puráns* were written at about the same time that the *Veds* were codified.

Of course Pouránism was also simultaneously developed, or, at all events, it could not have started much later into existence. But there was this difference between them, that the one professed to be deduced from the *Veds* and was necessarily orthodox, and was supported as such, while the other, if it did not explicitly deny the authority of the *Veds* at this stage, was still never anxious to receive their support, and was necessarily unorthodox. Before the age of Sákya the authority of the *Veds* remained undisputed, however much their various doctrines may have been twisted and tortured; but, if not openly questioned, the divinity of doubt was already at work, and those who rejected the never-ceasing prayers and endless ceremonials of the *Sanhitas* and the *Bráhmanas* for the dogmas enunciated by the Buddhas, did not apply to the *Veds* to support them. At this time, however, the prominent

feature of Buddhism was philosophical, though coupled, indeed, with new phases of thought and devotion; and this character was apparently retained by it throughout the entire era of the twenty-four Buddhas who preceded Sákya. Akin to it were the dogmas of Kapila, codified by Iswara Krishna, though in them the Buddhas are expressly spoken of as *Násticas*, or unbelievers, simply because they did not, as has been stated, lean on the *Veds* for support. The Bráhmans did not remain silent spectators of what they deemed to be the advances of atheism. The controversies and challenges were constant, and called forth all the talent so largely displayed on both sides. But it was not for controversy to decide religious supremacy; it was mainly the arm of power that regulated the scale. When the kings were Buddhists, the Bráhmans were obliged to submit; when the kings were Bráhmans or adherents of the Bráhmans, the reformers went to the wall: and thus matters went on till the age of Sákya. How Sákya re-coined the faith for the currency he gave to it, has now to be explained.

By birth Sákya was a Kshetriya prince, and Buddhism before his time was confined apparently to the Kshetriya race. His personal name was Sid'dhártha, Sákya being only a family-name which was especially adopted by him apparently to distinguish him from another Buddha (the sixteenth) who had preceded him. In youth his mind was formed in the school of the Bráhmans. He studied Bráhman philosophy and underwent Bráhman rites; but was dissatisfied with the result. He then lived for six years in retirement, in the neighbourhood of Gyáh, and watched and prayed till he attained the state of a Buddha, becoming the wisest and most perfect of the Buddhas, and therefore fit to codify that religion which had hitherto been communicated orally. He did not write down anything himself. Like all great philosophers of the ancient world, he taught by conversation only; but his precepts were remembered and repeated, and finally booked by his disciples. He laid an injunction on them,

in fact, to hand down to others what they heard from him; and this trust was faithfully discharged by them. The Buddhist code consists of three parts, (1) *Sutras*, or the discourses of Sákya, also called *Buddha Bachana*, or the words of Ádi-Buddha; (2) *Vinaya*, or code of morality; (3) *Abhi Dharma*, a system of metaphysics. The first of them was compiled by Ananda, the favourite disciple of Sákya; the second by Upáli; the third by Kasyápa. It is said that the first and second only had the sanction of the father-sage, but of the third he was not personally cognizant. It is known for certain that Sákya regarded all metaphysical discussions as vain and unprofitable, and frequently remarked that the ideas of 'being' and 'not being' did not admit of discussion.

Vedism was all rites and prayers; the doctrines promulgated by Sákya professed to save the soul by teaching. They were founded, as we have shown already, on a distinct belief of God, who however did not, it was maintained, encumber himself with the management of the world. The world is governed by everlasting laws of nature, by obedience to which we rise, and by disobedience fall. These laws cannot be set aside by prayers and worship; they were made for being practised, and must be practised. The fundamental doctrines of the faith followed these general precepts, and were four in number, namely, (1) that all existence is evil, because existence implies pain, sorrow, and decay; (2) that the source of evil is the desire for things which change and pass away; (3) that to avoid evil the only way is to seek for *Nirván;* and (4) that the certain way to find it is by following eight steps, namely, right belief, right judgment, right utterance, right motives, right occupation, right obedience, right memory, and right meditation. The search for *Nirván*, however, is not the only path open to man. There are two paths pointed out to him, one leading to personal happiness connected with personal existence, which can be secured by the good man by the practice of virtues, and is to be enjoyed in the worlds of the gods, whose existence

was not ignored; the other is the high-road to *Nirván*, which can be attained only by the highest perfection of intelligence. The former was represented by Sákya as being a state in which the soul desires nothing, hates nothing, and feels nothing but universal love and peace; and he asserted that many thousands of saints live so in the worlds of the gods, in countless hosts. Of the latter he stated: 'Keeping fast hold of the spirit, absorbed in himself, the hermit breaks his shell and hastens away from it *as a bird slips from the egg*;' that is, to freedom and light. It has been attempted to explain that the *Nirván* of Buddhism is akin to annihilation. But this certainly is not so. It simply means 'enfranchisement;' enfranchisement from this existence, which is evil, for an appreciation of the eternal. What is annihilated is the mortal part of man, his sins and ignorance. What are gained are purification and knowledge, a knowledge not of things but of reality, a knowledge of intelligence and of God. The only way of attaining this *Nirván* is by meditation, which necessarily implies meditation on God. The process of meditation was then attempted to be divided into stages, and this launched the religion into the wide sea of metaphysics.

Both for the religion of the heart and the religion of the intellect, a number of initial commandments were laid down by Sákya for observance, to which particular importance was attached. These were: (1) Do not kill; (2) Do not steal; (3) Do not commit adultery; (4) Do not lie, and (5) Do not become intoxicated. A better selection of primary rules could hardly have been made; but to these five others were added by his disciples, showing clearly how little they appreciated the teaching of their guide. These were: (6) Do not take solid food after noon; (7) Do not visit dances, singing, and theatrical representations; (8) Do not use ornaments and perfumery; (9) Do not sleep on luxurious beds; and (10) Do not accept presents of gold and silver. It was by additions of this nature, and by commentaries and expositions thereon,

that the simplicity of Sákya's teaching was destroyed. Many dogmas were added to the original code; and the *Abhi Dharma* of Kasyápa set up a vast and alarming fabric of abstractions and metaphysics.

There was nothing new in the doctrines of Sákya. In their main features they were identical with the doctrines of the sages, hermits, and Buddhas who had preceded him on the same track. But it was he who, for the first time, expressly repudiated the authority of the *Veds*, and, preaching his religion from town to town and village to village, invited to it believers from all castes. For the first time in the history of the world all the bonds of tribe and race were broken through, and it was emphatically declared that the lot of humanity was common and the deliverance from it open to all. Buddhism was not simply philosophic; though it asserted that the search for *Nirván* was the great object of life, it did not lose itself in idle speculations only, for it also encouraged the practice of benevolence, and prescribed laws for observance which included all the social duties of life and all the political duties of a citizen. The practical benevolence of the religion was unmistakable; its appeal to reason and common-sense was as clear as noonday; and more converts were made by it than Mahomedanism was able to secure by an appeal to force, or Christianity by an appeal to faith. It had this further advantage to back it, that, unlike the religions of the Jews and the Bráhmans, it required no sacrifice but that of the heart, no blood-offerings of any description. It set its face even against bodily austerity, which it condemned as much as evil lusts. All the penances and mortifications it required were those of the heart, which alone could purify it.

Buddhism ignored the *Veds;* but it did not ignore Bráhmanism: it only offered a better way. The character and tone of the religion were the highest that could have been assumed. It looked sorrowfully at life; asked neither for riches, pleasures, nor power; sought for salvation or freedom only by virtue, self-denial, and

knowledge; and was full of boundless charity towards all. Patience, humility, and forgiveness of injuries are all Buddha virtues; a reverence for truth, chastity, and temperance its cardinal doctrines; the safety of the soul its greatest concern. The mass of mankind did not care for the metaphysics which enshrouded it; their faith was confined to the simple tenet that goodness in this life will secure happiness in the next. It was this which brought in a new era of social and moral reform in a country where it was now, almost for the first time, announced to the masses that virtue is pleasing to God and sin offensive to Him. With this beautiful doctrine, Buddhism proclaimed equality and fraternity as fundamental principles of religion, and thus was it enabled in a short time to divide the empire of opinion nearly equally with Bráhmanism. Mr. Prinsep proves, on the evidence of coins and inscriptions, that India was under the sway of Buddhistic kings when Alexander invaded the country; and Colonel Sykes is positive that Buddhism prevailed over it generally from the time of Sákya to A.D. 700. Of course the Bráhmans disputed the ground with the Buddhists inch by inch; but, at the time indicated, the country was fairly divided between the two faiths.

The chief drawback of Buddhism was that it was a *sad* religion; preaching sadness through life, sadness through transmigrations, sadness that seeks salvation by enfranchisement! But this did not act as a determent, for even this sadness of it had a silent charm. The goodness of life which it inculcated carried with it its own reward; and the enfranchisement from evil it aspired to could not fail to make the heart light and buoyant. There was no counterpart to its doctrines in the belief of the Bráhmans. In some points only did Buddhism agree with Vedantism; but these were mere philosophical points, and even in respect to them the consonance was partial. Both considered existence to be an evil, both sought for the deliverance of the soul by abstract meditation, both considered active virtues to be of secondary importance; but

while Vedantism upheld *absorption* into the Deity as the final result to be wished for, Buddhism was content to look out only for *emancipation* from an evil existence as its greatest reward; while the one considered works to be fetters, and all fetters, whether of gold or iron, to be equally inconvenient, the other insisted on the practice of virtue by all who aspired either for personal happiness or for liberation.

But how did such a religion descend to the Llámá-ism of the present day, with its shaven priests, rosaries, bells, and confessions? The answer is: From the cold philosophy and mischievous monachism which the disciples of Sákya added to it. 'A hare fell in with a tiger; by means of *Yatna* (perseverance) the hare threw the tiger into a well. Hence it follows that *Yatna* prevails over physical force, knowledge, and the *Mantras;*' and so *Yatna* was cultivated, to the exclusion of other virtues. But, unfortunately, the duties enjoined by *Yatna* were very severe; few could really practise them: and so the seekers of knowledge, affecting *Yatna* but not practising the duties required by it, settled down into a caste of monks and nuns, who sought for *Nirván* without understanding what it meant. It was in this way that the teachings of Sákya sank down into Pharisaism, and that the fragments of his body who denied worship to the gods came to be deified. Mr. Wheeler contends that the relics of Sákya are not worshipped as gods, but merely as the memorials of a great teacher. The apology is very insufficient. If the tooth of Sákya can be revered unblamed, why should not the *lingam* of Mahádeva receive its share of deference? It is certain that Sákya himself would have protested most loudly against the impiety.

In India a vigorous protest was made against such laches by the godliness of Asoka, or Priyadarsi, a king of Magadha, who greatly improved the Buddhists' faith. His edicts inculcated goodness, virtue, kindness, and piety as being the cardinal doctrines of the religion, and enjoined the cultivation of *Dharma* as being more urgently

necessary than abstraction or monastic discipline. The division thus made was perpetuated by the distinctions now called 'Little Vehicle' and 'Large Vehicle,' of which the first has reference to moral duties, and the second to intellectual development. With these edicts, Asoka sent out numerous missionary monks to preach the religion, not only throughout India, but to all the surrounding countries, by which means it was most extensively propagated. Vedism was not known out of India; the religion of Zoroáster never wandered beyond the confines of Persia; the doctrines of Confucius were circumscribed within the limits of the Chinese Empire; but Buddhism, thrown broad-cast nearly all over Eastern Asia, took root in every place.

Of the revolution which subverted it in India, much is not known; but it was not from any defect of doctrine, but by the morbid hostility of the Bráhmans, that it was, after a long and relentless struggle, overthrown. If Buddhism be identical with Rákshasism, its first overthrow in India would date, as we have mentioned, from the Bráhma-Kshetriya war of Parusrám and the Rákshasa war of Ráma. But the faith which succumbed then was the effete Buddhism of the philosophers. The revived faith of Sákya was first opposed by Nanda, in the fourth century before Christ, but made head again under Asoka. After that era, new dynasties came into power that knew not Sákya or Priyadarsi, and cared not for their teachings. A violent reaction had intermediately improved Vedism by the manufacture of the *Vedánta,* and thus, all circumstances conspiring to that end, the Bráhmans were enabled to chase out with orthodox weapons an unorthodox faith, at a time when India was broken up into a large number of petty principalities, distracted alike by political and religious feuds. The exterminating persecutions were commenced by Kumarilla Bhatta, in A.D. 500, but up to A.D. 700 the decline of Buddhism was gradual. From the eighth century it became more precipitate, the severest blow being given to the religion in the ninth century, by

Sancarácharya, who contended with equal energy and the sharp acuteness of a thorough Vedantist against both Buddhism and Pouránism. One of the greatest conflicts with Buddhism, perhaps the very last, was fought in the neighbourhood of Benáres, at Sarnáth, which was a Buddha stronghold of great name. Disputation here came to blows, and Sarnáth was sacked and burned, probably in the eleventh century, when the Mahomedans had already appeared in the extreme North-west.

## CHAPTER IV.

### POURÁNISM; OR, THE POPULAR RELIGION.

WHEN Vedism was unable to keep its ground against Buddhism, it called in the aid of Pouránism to entertain the popular mind, and at the same time manufactured the *Vedánta* for the gratification of the philosophers. Both these new religions were based on the *Veds*, Pouránism being founded on the *Sanihtas* and [the *Vedánta* on the *Upanishads*. The mythology of the *Puráns*, however, was not simply an amplification of the mythology of the *Sanhitas*, but rather an extravagant perversion of it. Even in the oldest *Sanhitas* of the *Rig Ved*, the names of some of the Pouránic divinities occur; but a great many others were added by the *Puráns*, of whom the *Sanhitas* had no knowledge, while the characters given of them all were very different from those assigned to them by the Vedic hymns. The cause is obvious. The character and condition of the people had intermediately undergone many changes, and these were reflected in the religion as it was modified.

The age of the *Puráns* will probably be about the same as that of Vyasa, by whom they are said to have been codified, though of course all the *Puráns* were not of the same date, any more than all the *Veds* were. It may be observed of them generally, that they immediately followed the era of the *Atharván Ved* and the *Itihásea*, by the latter of which names the great poems, the *Rámáyana* and the *Mahábhárut*, are distinguished;

and this is established by the fact already mentioned that the *Puráns* are the first to speak of the *Veds* as being four, instead of three, in number, and then name themselves and the *Itihásees* as comprising a fifth *Ved.* The total number of the *Puráns* is eighteen, and they are named as follows: the *Brahma, Padma, Brahmánda, Agni, Vishnu, Garura, Brahma-Vaivarta, Saiva, Lainga, Narádya, Skanda, Márkandaya, Bhavishyat, Matsya, Varáha, Karma, Vámana,* and *Bhágabat.* They are reckoned to contain about four hundred-thousand stanzas; and besides them there are several *upa,* or minor, *Puráns* barely inferior to them in authority. The earliest of the *Mahá-Puráns* was the *Brahma Purán,* sometimes called the *Ádi Purán;* and the next to it was the *Padma Purán,* which asserts that the *Brahma Purán* came after it, a clear proof that it preceded it. Both these *Puráns* speak of the sanctity of *Utkal-desa* or Orissá, and the *Padma Purán* also describes Assám, which may be accepted as good evidence that when they were written the Indus had long previously been migrated from, and the extreme frontiers on the east occupied.

It is not necessary to give any analysis of the *Puráns* in this place, nor is it possible to do so within the limits available to us, the records being too bulky for compression within any reasonable compass. Their general character is nearly the same. Almost all of them speak very diffusely of the creation of the world and the human race, give elaborate accounts of the wars waged between the gods on the one side, and the *asoors* and *dasyas* respectively on the other, describe the planetary regions and the upper worlds, furnish long legends respecting the deities and sages, with bald genealogies of kings and princes, give expression to several metaphysical speculations and instructions for religious ceremonies, and spin out unending stories of *tirthyas* and bathing-places. On these convenient pegs the entire pantheon of the Hindus is expanded and embellished with fabrications of every description. In the Vedic age, the Bráhmans were truth-

telling: apart from the legends they composed, the hymn-writers stated things as they actually were. But the Pouránic writers never condescended to do so. Their statements are nothing if they are not untrue and preposterous.

The deities of the *Sanhitas* were the personifications of the elements and the powers of nature. The softly-setting sun and the silver moon were objects of reverence and prayer; in the rush of the storm and the course of the lightning were seen traces of angels and of gods; the fanciful descried a present deity in the earth beneath their feet; and the foolish paid the first fair honours of the harvest to the sky above them. But these were not the gods the *Puráns* delighted to honour. The elements and objects of nature had long ceased either to terrify or amaze, and did not require to be further propitiated. The names were accordingly altered, for the most part for those of human heroes—namely, those who had distinguished themselves in the *áhoor* and *dasya* wars,—and they were clothed with all the colours of a voluptuous life in recognition of the tempting natural enjoyments which the people themselves had succeeded to attain. It was thus that the gods of the *Sanhitas* came to be either set aside or superseded where they were not entirely denied. The Bráhmans did not venture to ignore them in every case, as to do so would have removed or loosened the foundation-stones on which their new fabric was upreared. But they did all they could to reduce those in honour and consequence whom they found it absolutely necessary to name, while many of the minor deities were conveniently lost sight of.

The differences in other respects also were very great. In the Vedic age there were no images made, nor temples consecrated to the gods to whom the hymns were addressed; and in the characters given of them there was rarely anything to blush at. The state of society had materially altered since then; the Bráhmans, before unsettled, had now conquered large fertile tracts of land,

which they comfortably occupied: the gods, therefore, were also made happy by local habitations and names being assigned to them. Among the Vedic gods, again, there was no competition; while Indra was addressed in prayer, Varuna was completely forgotten; for the time at least there was only one Supreme God, namely, the deity invoked, which may be understood as implying an undercurrent of monotheism in the midst of mythology. This feature of it was now altered. Each Pouránic god received a distinct form and name; the *Purâns* even described his features, limbs, colour, and apparel, and assigned to him, in every case, an individuality of character and a fixed position and status. While Vishnu was invoked, Siva was not forgotten; they fought with each other for the supremacy they respectively claimed; there were parties who upheld their several claims in these contests; they were absolutely 'gods many,' without any thread of monotheism to unite them together.

When the difference was so great between the two systems of mythology, the difference between the faiths of the *Upanishads* and the *Purâns* was, of course, much greater. The abstract notion of the Deity as inculcated in the terminal sections of the *Veds* was too difficult for the people to understand; and if the philosophers adhered to it for the sake of that very difficulty, they were not unwilling that the great mass of the people should have another faith for themselves, easier than 'a passage over the sharp end of a razor,' as they characterized the *Vedânta*. The great object held in view was to defeat the Buddhists, no matter how, and as their cue from the outset was the adoration of one God by intelligence, they were advisedly opposed by the adoption of a general worship of many gods without the exercise of much intelligence; and so two sections of the same community deliberately accepted for themselves diametrically opposite doctrines to suppress a common enemy. The first repulse of Buddhism was probably achieved just previous to the Pouránic era; after which the Bráhmans gave to all India

a common faith, calculated to suit all tastes and comprehensions, retaining at the same time the most metaphysical speculations regarding the Deity which were not unorthodox, as comprising the best religion for the enlightened few.

The authorities on which the new mythology was established were the *Smriti*, or the written Shástras, by which the *Puráns* and the *Itiháses* were meant, which we have already said are of less authority than the *Sruti*, or uttered Shástras—that is, the *Veds*. The *Puráns*, however, do not admit this to be the case. 'He who knows the four *Veds* and their supplements and the *Upanishads* is not really learned,' they say, 'unless he knows the *Puráns* also. Let a man, therefore, complete his knowledge of the *Veds* by a study of the *Itiháses* and the *Puráns*.' Similarly, the *Itiháses*, in speaking of themselves, declare that, as religious authorities, they are on an equality with the *Veds*. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Pouránic mythology is so divergent. With so many voluminous works to support it, it would have been wonderful indeed if it had been less extravagant.

We must now descend a little into particulars to give some adequate idea of the faith that was thus established. The Vedic triad, we have said, was composed of Agni, Váyu, and Surjya. The idea was copied by the *Puráns*, and a triad set up consisting of Bruhmá, Vishnu, and Mahádeva. Of these, Bruhmá is the same as the neuter Bruhmu of the *Upanishads*, but completely divested of the character given to him there, as the very fact of his being associated with two coadjutors clearly testifies. Bruhmá is also traceable in the *Sanhitas*, where he is once mentioned as being the same with Indra, and more distinctly on later occasions as Prajápati, Hiranyagarbha, and Viswakarmá. In the later *Veds* Vishnu is also mentioned, and several Rudras, who collectively assume in the *Puráns* the name of Mahádeva, or the Great God. These three together take the lead in the Pouránic pantheon, and are also singly superior to all the other gods. The

Vedic deities, Agni, Váyu, Varuna, and Soma, are almost nowhere in the *Puráns*. Surjya is nearly in the same boat with them, except that the *gáyatri* in the *Rig Ved* addressed to him has still to be repeated by the Bráhmans in their daily ceremonials. The mouth-honour conceded to him by that formula is thus continued; but besides that he receives no further attention. The Aświnis, Máruts, Vasus, etc., are almost completely ignored, being only ticketed and numbered among the three hundred and thirty millions that comprise the divine conclave of Sumeru.

The principal deities of Pouránism, then, are the male gods Bruhmá, Vishnu, and Mahádeva, and their *Sactis*, Seraswati, Lakshmi, and Umá or Párvati. Between the first three of these the *Puráns* themselves record a continuous contest for supremacy, which probably refers to internal feuds among the Bráhmans under different leaders. Bruhmá was apparently a god from the commencement, as distinguished from deified heroes, and therefore his rivals succeeded early in pushing him to the wall. The worship of Siva began most probably on the banks of the Indus, while that of Vishnu was originated on the banks of the Ganges; so that the latest of the triad was not admitted to that high rank till after a very wide diffusion of the Bráhmans over the peninsula. He is represented as having figured greatly in the Áhoor war, and he probably owed his exaltation to that circumstance; while Siva is understood to be a Hametic deity, forcibly introduced into India by the Ethiopian conquerors of the country, which is recorded by the tale of Daksha's sacrifice, when the rites of the Bráhmans were violently disturbed and the worship of the new god was introduced. Then followed the continuous wars of the Solar and Lunar races, and those waged between the Bráhmans and the Kshetriyas, which must have been connected, in some way or other, both with the quarrels of the Pouránic deities, and with the powerful opposition organized against Bráhmanism by the earlier Buddhas. All these contentions

were eventually settled by the triumph of the Bráhmans over the Buddhas in the fourteenth or fifteenth century before Christ, when, to remove the possibility of any future disagreement among themselves, the worship of the rival candidates of the *Puráns* was made uniform by the recognition of the *Trimurti*. The *Puráns* were contemporaneous with these quarrels, and are therefore party-spirited on principle. The *Matsya, Lainga, Saiva, Karma,* and *Skanda* are all Saivite in character; the *Vishnu, Náradya, Bhágabat, Padma,* and *Garura* uphold the faith of Vishnu; while the *Brahmánda, Brahma-Vaivarta, Márkandaya,* and *Bhavishyat* advocate the general worship of the female power. When they were all codified together and generally accepted, the sectarian wars were closed, every local belief and denominational opinion finding place in the inconsistent and contradictory whole, which bristled with anomalies of every description. It was then that passages were interpolated in them by which the rival gods were made to praise each other, whereby the great end held in view of satisfying all parties was attained. In the *Uttará Khanda* of the *Padma Purán*, Siva says to Párvati: 'Who adore other gods than Vishnu, and hold any his equal, are not to be looked at, touched, or spoken to'—a bold stroke on the part of an unscrupulous author to secure a desired end.

The abstract view of One God not having answered, the *Trimurti* and their *Sactis* were originated, and the former vested with the triple duties of generation, preservation, and destruction. This idea is not without Vedic support. The *Upanishads* maintain that the Highest Being exists in the three states of creation, continuance, and destruction; and when that Being was divided into three (the three in one), it was only right that their respective functions should be defined. Says Major Moor, in his *Hindu Pantheon*—'In mythology Bruhmá is the creator, Vishnu the preserver, and Siva the destroyer; in metaphysics the first is matter, the second spirit, and the third time; and in natural philosophy, earth, water, and fire, respectively.'

The generator, Bruhmá, had, however, his worship early overthrown by the struggles to which we have referred, which materially increased the renown and influence of the other two. They are both of them very largely worshipped to this day—Vishnu as preserver, and Siva as destroyer, as they are named in the Shástras; the latter also as generator, as represented by the *Lingam*, the truth intended to be inculcated being that destruction is only another name for regeneration. The emblem of the *Lingam* was, Lassen thinks, the chief object of veneration among the *dasyas*, who, on being subdued, made a present of the idea to the Bráhmans, that it might be associated with the worship of Rudra. Subsequently, the *Lingam* was united with the *Yoni*, the emblem of the *Sactis*, and was worshipped as *Argha*, Mahádeva being named *Arghanáth*, or lord of the *Argha*. This union was effected, probably, to patch up a peace between the *Sáctas* and the *Saivas*, the morality or immorality of the design being considered of minor account. At this time the morals of the Bráhmans must have very much deteriorated, and that of the people at large was probably no better. What the worship of Osiris was in Egypt, of Phallus amongst the Greeks, of Priapus amongst the Romans, that is the worship of the *Yoni* and the *Lingam* in India; and yet the temples dedicated to the *Argha* at this moment outnumber those dedicated to all the other gods taken together, the most important shrine being that of Visheswara at Benáres, which is more frequented even than the temple of Jagganáth.

After the three primary deities come in their wives, or energies—the executors of their will. This idea also is borrowed from the *Veds*, where the *Máyá* of Bruhmu is represented as a distinct being originating from him, and exercising all his powers. Seraswati, the wife of Bruhmá, is referred to in the *Veds* only as a holy river, which must have been converted into a goddess after the advance of the Bráhmans downwards from the Punjáb. She is also spoken of as Vách, or the divine word; while Lakshmi is

spoken of as a goddess of doubtful repute, and Umá as Ambiká, without any allusion to her union with Mahádeva. It will thus be seen that the rearrangement in the *Puráns,* though nominally based on the *Veds,* was in reality on an entirely new plan, though what that plan was may not be very intelligible at every point. The stories given in regard to the different deities are so various that it is difficult to understand if any regular draft was followed in reorganizing the national faith. Particular instances excepted, it looks rather as if the whole chaotic mass was put together at haphazard, and the combination set up for reverence. We cannot notice all these stories separately; we shall refer to one only to explain the sort of manipulation that was practised, and we select at random that regarding Umá, the chief of the *Sactis,* for our illustration. One Pouránic account makes her the daughter of the mountain Himávat, who married her to the unequalled Rudra, after which the devotee and the goddess began to indulge emulously in connubial love, and, neither being conquered, no child was born to them. Another makes her the energy of all the gods, who exhaled flames of anger from their mouths on hearing of the greatness and misdeeds of *Mahisásoor,* a demon, the flames resolving themselves into a goddess of exquisite beauty, by whom the demon was slain. It was easy to manufacture stories of this sort to any extent; possibly some of them were not mere stories, but had a basis of scientific truth in them. This much, however, may be accepted as certain, that the deification of human beings was the end held in view by most of them. Of Umá the virgin name was Kanya Kumári, or the maidenly. Her worship extended to the southernmost extremity of India, which was after her called Cape Kumári, since corrupted into Comorin. A suggestion has been thrown out that the worship of this goddess merely implies the worship of the constellation Virago, and that the adoration of several of the other gods can be similarly accounted for. This may be so. It is quite possible that some particular festivals had their rise

from natural causes, such as solistitial, astral, or season observances, and probably existed from time anterior to the *Puráns*. But when Pouránism and human deification were introduced, the festivals were all assigned to particular deities, and from that time became as mythological as the rest.

The germs of Pouránism were in the *Veds*, but their fanciful and extravagant development, as in the *Puráns*, was not arrived at till after the lapse of several ages. Some of the *Puráns* were probably contemporaneous with the first start of philosophical Buddhism, by which time the state of society had perhaps become vicious enough to require the substitution of frivolous ceremonies in place of moral duties, and the prescription of silly penances for the most revolting crimes. This materially helped the growth of Buddhism as an opposing power; but the Bráhmans, having succeeded in overthrowing that religion several times, naturally grew giddy with their success, and deliberately sat down to weave out more and more of silliness and frivolity, till the very voluminousness of the *Puráns* steadied their foundations. Many mud-forts in India have been found stronger than those built of stone —namely, those the bases of which were of ample bulk; and, on the same principle, the *Puráns* have turned out to be stronger fabrics than the *Veds*.

The first successes over Buddhism were obtained by Parusrám and Rámchandra, who were nearly contemporaneous; and the latter is expressly stated to have introduced the worship of Umá when proceeding to fight with the king of Ceylon. In the case of Umá, her identity with the daughter of a mountain-king is clearly mentioned, and, even if her worship had an astronomical origin, the real object held in view from the Pouránic times was, apparently, the exaltation of a favourite princess who may have done the country some service in her day. The identity of the other gods and goddesses cannot always be followed out with similar precision; but it may safely be assumed that, in most cases, the persons deified were

ascetics, sages, and heroes or heroines amongst the Bráhmans, while some doubtless were ideal creatures of the brain, embellished with qualifications and sins to suit the general taste. The motives for setting these up for worship must have been personal. All the Shástras, says Vrihaspati, had three authors only, namely, a buffoon, a rogue, and a fiend; and the character of the Pouránic gods and institutions fully justifies the supposition, though how and to what extent the manufacturers of them were benefited may be difficult to explain. Jamadagni says that the *devatás*, one and all, with their names, forms, and actions, are mere fictitious inventions contrived to back certain ordinances and practices the observance of which was considered salutary. But this explanation of them cannot be very easily followed; nor can it be admitted that the ordinances enjoined by the *Puráns* are always wholesome or salutary. In one, and one respect only, the *Puráns* do exhibit a decided superiority over the *Veds*. The religion of the *Sanhitas* both prescribed and advocated the use of the *Soma* and *Sura* drinks; but the *Puráns*, though representing their deity-in-chief, Siva, as a drunkard and a smoker of narcotic drugs, set their face against the use of such potations and drugs by men, and the *Institutes of Menu* explicitly declare that the Bráhman who drinks wine and spirits sinks for that offence to the rank of a Sudra. The reason for this change apparently was that, by the time the *Puráns* and the *Smriti* generally were codified, the warmest parts of India had become occupied, when the renunciation of the use of liquid-fire became a medical need, and was therefore religiously prescribed.

One singular feature of later Pouránism is the worship of the *avatárs*, or incarnations, who, it is pretended, visited the earth for the relief of humanity when in sufferance, and the exaltation of piety and virtue when depressed. This feature is peculiar to the worship of Vishnu. The worship of Mahádeva is concentred in that of the *Lingam*, while that of Vishnu is comprised in the worship of his chief *avatárs*, Ráma and Krishna, both of whom came to

destroy sinners and to purify the earth. The story of Ráma has been immortalized by Válmik, and that of Krishna by Vyasa, the two best poems in Sanskrit having been written to commemorate their services to mankind. The other Pouránic deities largely worshipped are Siva and Lakshmi, the latter mainly as a *griha-devatá*, or household divinity. The greatest sages of the country, even those who professed monotheism to be their only faith, divided themselves into parties to found and confirm the adoration of one or other of these divinities; and they all held, as is held by most Hindus to this day, that the worship of 'gods many' is not incompatible with that of one God. 'As rivers through a hundred channels seek the sea, so faith seeks God through all the different names that are worshipped.' The different gods, it is contended, are all one; there is no difference between them but in name; they are the diversified forms of the same being; and the worship paid to them severally is essentially the same, being nothing more or less than the worship of one God. This is substantially untrue in point of fact. That it is nevertheless so generally and persistently maintained shows how strongly the Pouránic fabric is founded.

We have eschewed all reference to the minor deities of the *Puráns*, whose name is legion, as all we intended in this chapter was to explain the nature of Pouránism, without going into details about it. Once set up, it was only a work of time for the system to expand, till it became what it now is, the most extravagant, wild, and divergent polytheism in the world, including cows, bulls, monkeys, reptiles, and birds as gods. It may be fully admitted that many fragments of historical and metaphysical truth, which survived the loss of a purer creed, have been blended with the wild legends that are narrated. But, unfortunately, the intolerable deal of sack has been too much for the halfpenny-worth of bread, which it is impossible to recognise in the compound.

Of course the mythology is very imposing, but all its splendour is in the external varnish only. There is

nothing solid within. If the framers of it had only left the characters of their deities blameless, there would not have been so much to complain of; but it is here that they have bungled most. Adopting the account of the *Upanishads*, the *Puráns* also, in some places, declare God to be destitute of qualities. It would have been well if they had adhered even to this negation throughout. Unfortunately they did not and could not do it. We have only to refer to the triad—the greatest of the gods—to discover how revoltingly they are described. The representation of Bruhmá is that of a scholar and a hermit, and the colour given to him is dark or golden. The *Veds* also speak of him as the 'golden orb' and the 'source of golden light;' but it was left to the *Puráns* to explain what the golden colour means. It means simply that the god is replete with amativeness; and the *Puráns* then go on to illustrate their assertion, one of the least astounding of the proofs advanced being that, as the *Vishnu Purán* has it, Bruhmá attempted the chastity of his own daughter Sandhya, or, as the *Matsya Purán*, which names her Satarupá, makes out, lived with her for a hundred years. The usual representation of Vishnu is that of a warrior, and the character given to him is somewhat better than that of his colleagues. Among the gods too he was a polygamist, having two wives, Lakshmi and Satyavámá, and this ought to have kept him altogether away from incontinence. But we read in the *Padma Purán* that he ruined Brinda, a chaste wife, by assuming the form of her husband Jalandhar, an *asoor*, and became a tree to deceive another stubborn lady, also of the *asoor* race. The accounts of Siva are yet worse, notwithstanding that the general character given to him is that of a devotee. The following description of him is of a rather favourable kind: 'He wanders about surrounded by ghosts and goblins, inebriated, naked, and with dishevelled hair, covered with ashes of a funeral pile, ornamented with human skulls and bones, sometimes laughing and sometimes crying.' But the representations

which depict him as sedulously hunting after females are far more frequent; and his indecorous and open dalliance with his wife was such as filled the *rishis* with amazement and horror. What the actual state of society in India at the period when the *Puráns* were composed was, will perhaps never be understood. That it was at least nearly as bad as the books indicate, is clear from the strenuous efforts that were made, from time to time, by the scholars and sages to recall attention to the *Veds*.

## CHAPTER V.

### VEDANTISM; THE RELIGION OF THE ORTHODOX PHILOSOPHERS.

VEDANTISM was manufactured simultaneously with Pouránism, and for the self-same object, namely, the destruction of Buddhism. It had an anterior existence in the *Upanishads*, but had no connection whatever with the *Sanhitas* and the *Bráhmanas*. The speculative chapters appended to the *Bráhmanas* treated exclusively of Bruhmu; and, besides the particular *rishis* with whom the idea originated, a great many other sages supported it, including Ikshwaku, Vasishta, and Parásar. But the misty dreams of the *Upanishads* were not fully developed in their age, and the *Vedánta* was necessarily not well understood till it was systematized in the next generation by Krishna Dwaipayana, the son of Parásar, best known by his surname of Vyasa, or the compiler. It was this great scholar who codified both the *Veds* and the *Puráns*, that is, the entire orthodox faith of the nation, to guard them against the wiles of an unorthodox enemy. But in doing this he felt that something more than mere codification was necessary to secure the adhesion of the learned, and to attain that end he compiled from the *Upanishads* a compendious abstract of theology, or rather a catalogue of proofs in respect to it, which he called the 'resolution,' or, as Sir William Jones interpreted the term *Vedánta*, 'the end and scope' of the whole scriptures. He did not deny the pretensions of idolatry; it was not in his power to do

so, nor would it have answered his object to create a division in the orthodox camp by attempting it: he deliberately gave to both idolatry and his own faith the same stable foundation of the *Veds*. But he distinguished broadly the relative position of each, called one the religion of the wise, and the other that of the ignorant, and then left it to the choice of his readers to embrace whichever doctrine they preferred.

We start then, by accepting Vyasa as the founder of the new doctrine, and his *Sáririka Sutras*, otherwise called the *Vedánta Durshan*, as its chief code of authority; and this carries back the date of its first promulgation to the fourteenth century before Christ. The *Gitá* of Krishna was composed at the same time and by the same author, and contained one of the best expositions of the new faith, whereby the time for its wider acceptance was materially hastened. The greatest sages of the day had already become weary of the prayers of the *Sanhitas* and the sacrifices of the *Bráhmanas*, and eagerly accepted the monotheism of the *Vedánta* as supplying the one unfilled longing of their hearts. The intuitive knowledge of God, which was lost before the age of the *Sanhitas*, was thus recovered; but recovered only by those whose minds had become sick of the extravagances of the *Puráns*. The disciples of Vyasa, it is true, were many, and their disciples again were still more numerous; but there is little doubt, for all that, that Vedantism was never very generally propagated, and that the relapses from it to idolatry were frequent. 'The doctrine of this knowledge of God,' says the *Vedánta*, 'cannot be well comprehended, for it is very subtle;' 'even the gods were frequently in doubt respecting it:' and this led the Vedantists themselves to point out the need of idolatry as a sort of mental exercise for men of limited understandings to secure them from the rock of atheism and prepare their minds for the adoration of God. The fact is, that, for a long time, Vedantism was not in a position to assert its pre-eminence independently of Pouránism, that is, so long as Buddhism was alive and

vigorous. It was only after Buddhism had fallen in the wane that the advocates of the *Vedánta* advanced, demanding to be fully heard. We do not find till A.D. 900 a scholar like Sancaráchárjya coming to the fore to refute in the same breath the doctrines of Buddha and the *Purâns.*

The *Vedánta,* as it was understood by the philosophers, was a very noble religion, and marched along with Buddhism a considerable way. The idea of the Godhead as upheld by both was almost equally sublime, that according to the *Vedánta* being perhaps a shade sublimer even than the other. No higher conception of the Deity than that to which Vyasa gives expression can well be imagined; no better sentiments in regard to Him are anywhere to be met with, notwithstanding all the metaphysical and speculative blunders by which the great truth is enshrouded. He is described as being 'sole existent, one without a second, uncreate, omnipotent, and infinite;' 'a spirit without passions, separated from matter, pure wisdom and happiness, everlasting, unchangeable, and incomprehensible.' 'The best idea that we can form of God,' says Vyasa, 'is that He is light.' Of this it may be said that it gives no idea of Him at all. But even Milton refers to the notion as a sublime one, and both Buddhism and the Bible* regard it in the same sense. In the latter God describes Himself as 'I am that I am.' The very same words almost are used in speaking of Him alike by Buddhism and the *Vedánta.*

Very strenuous were the efforts thus made by the Bráhmans to regain the original idea of God with which they had parted company so long. The way to the search was undoubtedly first indicated by the Buddhas; but the faith of the latter being unorthodox could not be generally accepted, and so the Bráhmans sat down to consult again the great Shástras they had compiled on the banks of the Indus—the inviolable *Sruti* uttered by God—for that pure natural theology which, even in the midst of impurity

1 John 1—5.

and defilement, the heart is so loth to relinquish: and who shall say that their search was unsuccessful? The way had been prepared for them by previous aspirants; the *Upanishads* had became part and parcel of the *Veds:* and on the strong basis of those appendages was monotheism revived.

But the comparatively simple age of the *Upanishads* had unfortunately already gone by, and had been followed by a speculative and metaphysical era which disfigured with its mysticisms the brightest ideas of God. It was so with Buddhism, and so again with Vedantism. The exalted definitions of the Deity to which we have referred were hampered by speculative dogmas which necessarily compromised them. The Great Being recognised as supreme was deliberately characterized as being 'void of qualities,' not meaning thereby that His qualities did not partake of the nature of our qualities, and were different from what our notions represent them to be, but that he was destitute of them altogether. 'Every attribute of a first cause exists in Him,' says Vyasa, 'but He is void of qualities.' This may fairly be interpreted to mean that the physical attributes of omnipotence, omnipresence, etc., were allowed to Him, but not moral qualities, such as love, mercy, and benevolence; and we find it expressly stated that where such qualities are assigned to Him it is done merely to suit the Vedánta theology to the understanding of young beginners, and not under any impression that they actually exist in Him. Vyasa takes care explicitly to inform us that though on this point the texts of the Veds themselves should be found contradictory, some enduing the Creator with qualities of every character and others denying them to Him altogether, 'the latter only are to be considered as truly applicable, and not the former, nor yet both.'

God is also spoken of by the *Vedánta,* in common with Buddhism, as being unconnected with His own creation, sitting aloof in a state of profound abstraction and inactive tranquillity, and enjoying unimpassioned blessedness

'in the solitariness of His own unity.' He is not an all-superintending and ever-watchful agent, as the human mind naturally delights to regard Him; but as one unencumbered with the management of the world, and free from the cares and vexations of such a charge. In the *Suta Upanishad* Suta represents the Deity 'like one asleep,' and Krishna in the *Gítá* says: 'These works (the universe) confine not me, for I am like one who sitteth aloof uninterested in them all.' The whole impressive theory of an uncreate, omnipotent, and everlasting God, the grandest delineations of His wisdom and infinity, are thus with one torpedo-touch completely deadened. Where stray texts vindicate His watchfulness it is only to be understood that, like a mirror, He receives the shadows of all surrounding objects. He is no more watchful than a passive mirror!

The creation of the universe Vedantism assigns to God. Everything that exists, says the *Vedánta*, was created by an act of His will; and it declares that no motive need be assigned for such creation, besides that will. This is good so far as it goes; but it does not go far enough for the purposes of a dignified monotheism. We are not to understand that God spake and it was done: He commanded and it stood fast. No: dissatisfied with His own solitariness, He merely feels a desire to create worlds, and then the volition ceases so far as He is concerned, and He sinks again into His apathetic happiness, while the desire thus willed into existence assumes an active character. This desire is severally called *Máyá*, *Sacti*, and *Prácriti*, by different writers, and it is asserted that the universe was created by *Máyá* without the exertion of Bruhmu. Says the *Mandaká Upanishad*: 'God desired and willed, and forth issued His energy, and from His energy proceeded life, minds, elements, worlds, duties, and their fruits.' In the *Swetaswatárá Upanishad* this *Máyá* is represented as 'one unborn, red, white, and black, creating many beings of the same forms, through delighting in whom one man is sunk in slumber, and by forsaking whose allure-

ments another becomes immortal; and this is interpreted by Sancarácharjya to mean that *Máyá*, or the one unborn, possesses the qualities of impurity, purity, and darkness; that creatures formed by it are accordingly either affectionate, wise, or ignorant; and that whosoever delighteth in illusion remains immersed in darkness, but whosoever despises it and is able to distinguish the real nature of his soul obtains salvation. The *Vedánta* also represents Máyá as being that substance through which, or rather by means of which, the Deity, Himself lost in calm repose, catches all the phenomena dependent upon the contemplation of the universe. This separation of energy from the Godhead is assuredly one of the boldest and obscurest conceptions ever hazarded by philosophy, and seems to have been adopted to obviate the difficulty of reconciling the origin of material substances from a purely spiritual source. But this was like jumping from the frying-pan into the fire, for it reduced all things in nature to mere phantasmagorian unrealities.

The first thing created by God, or rather produced by *Máyá*, was, according to Vyasa, ether, or void space, as the word *ácás* has been differently translated. From ether was educed air, from air fire, from fire water, and from water earth. It was by the energy of God, and not by their own act, that they were thus educed; but they were made by *Máyá* and therefore had no actual existence. The position of Máyá itself is between something and nothing. It is both real and unreal; real, inasmuch as it is the cause of all that people usually look upon as real, but unreal because it exists not as a being. It is not true because it has no essence, and yet is not false because it exists as the power of God. In like manner the universe is real because it appears to be so, but unreal because it is only an appearance. 'From the highest state of Bruhmá to the lowest state of a straw, all are delusions;' and they would vanish into nothing, each element merging into one another in the reversed order of eduction, if the energy of the Great Spirit, to which they owe their origin and which alone sustains

the whole phenomenon, were for a moment to suspend its connection with them.

The same course of evolution and absorption, however, cannot, says the *Vedánta*, be affirmed of the soul, for the soul is not one of the productions of *Máyá*. Life is the presence of the Deity in illusion; its emanation is no birth, nor original production. The body is mere illusion, and like all other illusions is created and dissolved; but neither its creation nor its dissolution affects the soul, for 'the soul is not subject to birth or death.' 'It is not a substance of which it can be said it was, or is, or will be hereafter; for it is eternal and inexhaustible, and is incapable of perishing with the body.' 'That self-existent and eternal intelligence,' thus speaks of it the *Katha Upanishad*, 'who is neither born nor dies, and who has neither proceeded from any nor changed into any, does not perish when the body perishes.' It is also declared to be consubstantial with God. Says Vyasa: 'All life is Bruhmu;' 'He is soul, and the soul is He;' 'all life is a portion of the Supreme Ruler as a spark is of fire.' 'Who standing on the earth is other than the earth,' says Yagnawalcá to Uddalacá, 'whom the earth knows not, whose body the earth is, who interiorly restrains the earth, the same is thy soul and mine;' and Vách, daughter of Ambhrina, speaking of herself, says: 'I am above the heavens, beyond the earth, and what is the Great One that am I.' In the *Rig Ved* it is mentioned that the aggregate life of all beings in existence constitute a *fourth* part of God. But the *Vedánta* does not recognise this calculation by rule and compass. It only declares that the divine spirit, though differing in degree, is the same in nature with that of all living beings. It does not mutilate the Deity; for it maintains that individuated souls are portions parcelled without being actually cut off.

Human spirit, then, is the same as the spirit of God. 'There is no difference,' says Sadánanda, 'between the Supreme Ruler and individual intelligences;' 'both are pure life;' man and the Deity are essentially the same. In the *Veds* the soul is declared to be 'uncreate' and

'eternal,' and in the *Gítá* Krishna tells Arjun that he and the other princes of the earth 'never were not.' This is not simply no return to pure monotheism; it is the assertion of a non-existence in the universe of anything but God. It does not admit of the pantheistic interpretation which has been attempted by some writers to be given to it; for the spirits of creatures, though declared to be uncreate and eternal, are not gods. The God of the *Vedánta* is *one;* human spirit is not God; the Deity, though diversified in His creation, is not exhausted in the act; He still remains entire, and that entirety is God. Men partake of the divine nature, but as sparks partake of the nature of fire; they do not, either individually or collectively, represent the infinite whole, and the infinite whole alone is God. We would also vindicate Vedantism from the charge of materialism advanced against it, that according to it God is matter as well as life. This is not so. God is indeed spoken of as the 'efficient and material cause of the world,' and as the 'cause of all things as well as the things themselves;' but it is also maintained most directly that God is a spirit and immaterial, and wherever He is identified with matter He is only identified as its source. Actual matter, according to the *Vedánta*, does not exist; it was neither created by God, nor co-existing with God, nor God Himself. All material substances are mere illusions, existing only because pervaded by the energy of the spiritual First Cause. This is exquisitely explained by Krishna in the *Gítá:* 'I am the moisture in the water, light in the sun and moon, sound in space, sweet-smelling savour in the earth, glory in the source of light: *in all things I am life.*' The connection of spirit with matter is very aptly exemplified by the instance of fire as existing in red-hot iron.

The soul being declared to be consubstantial with God, it was only one step further in error to aspire for its absorption with Him; and this opened out another wide field of metaphysical mysticism. It is here that Vedantism departs furthest from Buddhism, which, content with

enfranchisement from an evil existence, does not presume to aspire to an intermixture with the Deity. Says the *Vedánta:* 'Superior to nature is God, who is omnipresent and without material effects; by acquisition of whose knowledge man becomes extricated from ignorance and distress, and is absorbed into Him after death.' 'Learned men having reflected on the spirit of God extending over all moveable and immoveable creatures, are after death absorbed into the Supreme Being.' 'The knower of God becomes God.' 'As rivers flowing merge into the sea, losing both name and form, so the knower of God, freed from name and form, merges in Him, the excellent and the glorious.' This reunion with the Deity is identified with the attainment of the highest bliss, which even a state so high as that of Bruhmá does not afford; and it consists in the total loss of personal identity, which has been well compared with a drop of water losing itself in the vast ocean. 'Future happiness,' says Vasishta, 'consists only in being so absorbed into the Deity, who is a sea of joy;' and therefore is the attainment of this absorption declared to be the sole business of life. It is not however to be obtained by penances and mortifications, nor by the performance of meritorious actions; 'for works,' says the text, 'are not to be considered as a bargain,' and again, 'the confinement of fetters is the same whether the chain be of gold or iron.' Knowledge alone, and that knowledge only which realizes everything as Bruhmu, procures the liberation and absorption which comprise together the *ne plus ultra* of the Vedantist's aspiration. 'He traverses both thereby,' says the *Vrihad Aranyáká Upanishad*, 'both merit and demerit.' 'The heart's knot is broken,' says the *Mandaká;* 'all doubts are split, and all his works perish.' The *Katha Upanishad* asserts that 'there is no other way to salvation.' 'O Párvati!' exclaims the *Kularnava*, 'except that knowledge there is no other way to absorption.'

This was the religion of the Vedánta as Vyasa and his disciples understood and propagated it; this was the religion that was pitted against Buddhism to wean away

philosophers from the enemy's ranks, while Pouránism undertook to wean away the mass. Like Buddhism, it also considered existence to be an evil, separation from which was to both the final reward. The method for obtaining release, too, was in both religions the same, namely, by *Buddhi* or knowledge. The use of the understanding was therefore held to be superior to the practice of deeds, for God was to be known only through the acute intellect constantly directed towards him by men of penetrating understandings. In the *Varuni Upanishad*, when Bhrigu asks his father Varuna to make known to him God, the sage tells him: 'That spirit whence all beings are produced, that by which they live when born, that towards which they tend, and that into which they finally pass, seek thou to know, for that is Bruhmu;' and 'seek him,' adds the philosopher, 'by profound meditation, for devout contemplation is Bruhmu.' Perfect abstraction is next pronounced to be superior to the use of the understanding, for 'when the senses and the mind are at rest,' says the *Vedánta*, 'and when the understanding is not occupied, that is the state for obtaining liberation;' and again, 'when the Yogi renounces all assistance from the understanding, and remains without the exercise of thought, he is identified with Bruhmu, and remains as the pure glass when the shadow has left it.' Though he is still connected with the affairs of life, though he still eats and drinks, he is henceforth indifferent to the illusions which encompass him, and lives destitute of passions and affections, neither rejoicing in good nor sorrowing in evil. He lives sinless; for, 'as water wets not the leaf of the lotus, so sin touches not him who knows God;' and in such a state of perfection as to stand in no further need of virtue, for 'of what use can be a winnowing fan when the sweet southern wind is blowing? All his meditations in this condition are: 'I am Bruhmu; I am life;' 'I am everlasting, perfect, perfect in knowledge, free from change; I am the self-existent, the joyful, the undivided, and the one Bruhmu:' or rather—'Neither I am, nor is ought mine, nor do I exist;' 'O God! I am nothing apart from Thee.'

But this knowledge of God is represented as excessively difficult of attainment; so difficult, in fact, that in the very *Upanishads* the greatest scholars acknowledge their utter inability to secure it. 'Whom dost thou worship?' asks Ushwapati in the *Ch'handagya Upanishad* of the six inquirers after divine knowledge who come to him for instruction, and one answers 'heaven,' another 'the sun,' the third 'air,' the fourth 'ether,' the fifth 'water,' and the sixth 'the earth.' These were the answers, not of ignorant men unlearned in the scriptures, but of sages who were, to quote the language of the *Upanishad*, 'deeply conversant with holy writ.' In another place in the same *Upanishad*, Nárad, soliciting instruction from Sanutcumár, says of his previous studies: 'I have read the *Rig Ved*, the *Yajur Ved*, the *Sam Ved*, the *Atharván* the fourth, the *Itiháses*, and the *Puráns* . . . All these have I studied, yet do I only know the text and have no knowledge of the soul.' A religion so difficult was necessarily impracticable for the multitude, who besides being unread were begirt with illusion. 'The mass of illusion,' says the *Vedánta*, 'forms the inconceivable and unspeakable glory of God,' for it is through illusion that His power is made manifest. It is the mask with which the Deity covers Himself for His amusement, and 'it is the producing cause of consciousness, of the understanding, of intellect,' etc. But illusion as each individuated being feels it is merely the absence of wisdom, as darkness is nothing more than the absence of light. From it are begotten all our passions and affections, and all the bonds that tether us to life; and on account of it only is the human soul, by some means not palpable, excluded from participating in the divine nature, and subject to virtue and vice, the passions and sensations, birth and death, and all the varied changes of this mortal state. It is this that makes a man believe that appearances have a real existence, that images and shadows are actual realities, and that not only this world certainly exists, but that he himself is nothing more than what he appears. It is this that makes God and soul, though consubstantial with each other, appear as

distinct 'as light and shadow.' As a small cloud before the eye, though insignificant in itself, is by its position large enough to hide the sun, even so does this illusion screen the great Bruhmu from human understanding, and thus obstruct the attainment of that knowledge which alone can purchase our emancipation. And this was, necessarily, the position of the mass.

Apart from the seekers of knowledge, therefore, were those who loved works of merit and performed them, in the vain hope of compassing the same end by a different way. 'Knowledge and works both offer themselves to man; the wise chooses the first, despising the second; while the fool, for the sake of enjoyment, accepts what leads to fruition.' The path of the latter is declared to be full of darkness, and it is also longer and more circuitous, since 'actions performed under the influence of illusions are followed by eight millions of births.' The only course left to the aspirant, in fact, is to ascend step by step the arduous ladder of improvement, commencing with the destruction of his sins, which secures to him a residence with the gods as his first reward. But in the heavens of the gods all enjoyment is temporary, and destined to terminate sooner or later as the deeds which they recompense may have been few or many. 'All the regions between this (the earth) and the abode of Bruhmá, afford but a transient residence,' says the *Gitá*; and on its works being exhausted by enjoyment, the soul, thus temporarily happy, returns again to the earth, but 'with resulting influence of its former deeds;' that is, obtaining a higher place in life than it had before. This state of constant transmigration gives to the lover of works a chance of obtaining the knowledge of Bruhmu, and, if it is attained, 'having annulled by fruition other works which had begun to have effect, and having enjoyed the recompense and suffered the pains of good and bad actions, he, on the demise of the body, proceeds to a reunion with God;' while the unsuccessful candidate, whose devotions are broken off by the general destruction of the universe, can only pass into a state of non-existence, not absorption, remaining

liable to be reproduced at any future renovation of the world.

The final results of the *Vedánta,* thus explained, are so aimless and unsatisfactory that it is scarcely to be wondered at that its hold on the human heart was never very strong. Buddhism expelled from the country, and Vedantism so intricate to understand and so unstable to depend upon, what was left to the multitude but uncertainty and indecision? This fully accounts for their constant oscillation for ages between the different magnets that attracted them, and for the frequent revivals of the religions that were struck down, till rampant Pouránism levelled everything before it and acquired a complete mastery over the popular mind.

## CHAPTER VI.

### RESULTS OF THE RELIGIOUS STRUGGLES AND THE CHANGES THEY INTRODUCED.

We have attempted in the preceding chapters to indicate the progress of religious thought and organization amongst the Hindus, from their settlement on the banks of the Indus down to the era of the *Puráns* and the *Vedánta*. The first age was that of the *rishis* and the Vedic hymns, when the religion of the people was simple, and their social life poor. They had not then commenced to live in cities, and well-protected houses; the lightnings gleamed fitfully around them, and the clouds poured rain over them; the sun smote them with scorching rays, while the moon beamed on them her soothing radiance; the air blew wild, and the noise of the agitated leaves either stirred them with fear or tickled them with pleasure. These, therefore, were the objects they adored, still believing that in them, or through them, they worshipped God, or that great idea with which they had started. The government among them at this time was patriarchal; each family was ruled by its own head, who was also its priest, and offered sacrifices and performed devotions and domestic rites without requiring any assistance from others. The Bráhmans, of course, existed; they were all Bráhmans at this time: the Bráhmans did not exist yet as a separate class. Each father upheld the sacred fire in his own house; his womankind, as well as his sons, joined him in the invocations that were addressed to the deities; no husband had begun to

take unto himself more than one wife; the social relations were yet in their simplest state.

This was the first stage. In the next, the Bráhmans had extended their territorial possessions by encroaching on the *dasyas*—peoples of various habits and characters, who had no poetry or traditions of their own, and were grouped together under one general name by their conquerors. They were not altogether destitute of civilisation, as some writers have depicted them. Both the *Veds* and the *Puráns* represent them as a community possessing cities of stone and iron at a time when the Bráhmans had scarcely huts to put their heads in. From them the Bráhmans borrowed many of the useful arts of life, including house-building, and the changes thus introduced affected greatly the religious development in progress among the latter. The area of religious belief was widened; the householder found himself now to be unequal to all the duties which devolved upon him; particular persons were, therefore, especially selected to relieve him of his religious duties, and he resigned his place of privilege to the *Poorohit,* to whom was intrusted the performance of devotions and the presentation of sacrifices; the hymns ceased to be sung by the father of the family, and their character also was changed from the child-like simplicity of the first age to a more intellectual conformation; and to the songs were added ritual commentaries that introduced the Bráhmana period.

The *Bráhmanas* modified the Vedic hymns and changed the usages of the Vedic era to meet the altered circumstances of the people, and to secure for the Bráhman class an acknowledged superiority over the races conquered by them. But with these changes others came of themselves as the products of the times, which it was not in the power of the Bráhmans to keep out. Well-settled and housed, the more intellectual members of the community regarded with different feelings than before the monitions of nature around them. There was an unquietness and a disappointment engendered in their minds which neither the hymns nor the sacrifices could allay. What am I? How far

removed from the the First Cause from whom I started? How is He to be regained? These were the inquiries that forced themselves on each deep thinker of the age, and made him restive. The reverential affection of the first period came back to him, but qualified by the measured calculations of philosophical piety. Important social questions also arose and demanded solution, namely, those of equality and fraternity; and, all these causes conspiring, Buddhism was pushed forward to the front, though, unlike the religion of the *Sanhitas* and the *Bráhmanas*, it was not at this stage adapted for promulgation to the multitude. As a general religion it took a long time to develop itself. The basis upon which it was established was not fully laid down all at once, or by one master mind. Thought begat thought, and one point gained brought forward another, after which there was a protracted comparison of notes among different individuals, all called Buddhas or philosophers, the entire result of their researches being finally adjusted in the comparatively modern times of Sákya Muni of Magadha.

The empire of opinion was, however, not the less divided because the first antagonistic religion took such a long time to be systematized. The influence of the philosophers in India has at all times been very great; and their claim to reassert the direct worship of God without the intervention of the priest kept the Vedists at bay almost from the commencement, till they all united together to oppose them. The pretensions of the Buddhas were thus vigorously resisted even from the outset. The philosophers among the Bráhmans pointed to the neuter Bruhmu of the *Upanishads* as the only one God suited for the intelligent soul to contemplate upon; while, completely to swamp the party which upheld an unorthodox belief, they also mixed up all the religions, laws, and usages of the different races brought together under them, by manufacturing the *Puráns* and the *Itiháses*, among the legends and traditions of which every shade of opinion was recorded, which secured to them the support and countenance of the largest number of the

people. The religion of the *Puráns* was thus merely a compromise, by which the masses were bought over to support the Bráhman power. The sages of the orthodox school still continued to devote themselves to the contemplation of one God only, whom they identified with the Bruhmu of the *Upanishads.*

The revolts and counter-revolts of Buddhism against Vedantism and Pouránism, and of Pouránism against Buddhism and Vedantism, were continued for a long time. When the search for a pure God was prosecuted, both Buddhism and Vedantism came forward to offer what was needed; when the people fled from melancholy and asceticism, the gods of the *Puráns* were revived. Thus voluptuaries turned to abstinence and recluses to voluptuous trains of thought alternately for relief, those lowermost at one time being uppermost at another, and then lowermost again. Sákya Muni simply headed one of these revolts or revolutions, and being the wisest of the Buddhas, availed himself of the opportunity to codify the Buddhist's faith, and propagated it widely among the masses. This created the marked division of opinion we have noticed, or rather gave to an existing division of opinion its character of permanence.

For a long time both the *Veds* of the Bráhmans and the *Sutras* of the Buddhists were unwritten and uncollected, and were transmitted from mouth to mouth from generation to generation; and yet so thorough and religious was the care bestowed on their preservation, that no various reading of either was ever suggested. The *Veds* were not compiled till the time of Vyasa, or the fourteenth century before Christ, when the art of writing was acquired by the Hindus; while the Buddha *Sutras* were not codified till some eight hundred years later. It was after this codification of the latter that the wars between the two rival religions assumed their exterminating character. Rebellious reason, with a regular code to back it, refused to succumb to Bráhmanism and the voluminous Shástras on which it was based. Eventually, however, Bráhmanism was trium-

phant, but not till it had exerted itself almost to exhaustion. Sedulously was the truth sought for by the higher aspirants on both sides, and that it was found is not to be doubted. But with the truth thus discovered was mixed up an alarming mass of error that almost neutralized its character. All the inquirers agreed in acknowledging God, but the acknowledgment was so worded that, while Buddhism did not escape the charge of Atheism, Vedantism was deliberately accused of Pantheism. As for Pouránism, it assumed from the first such an extra breadth of thought and liberalism that it has never failed to support any shade of theology and morality that has ventured to appeal to it; but it has of course always been regarded by the philosophers as a religion fit only for the unwise.

The overthrow of Buddhism did not revive the religion of either the *Sanhitas* or the *Bráhmanas*, and scarcely even that of the *Upanishads;* but it very favourably affected the religion of the *Puráns*, to which the greatest number of the community were devotedly attached. All the Vedic systems had, in fact, intermediately become more or less obsolete, and new orders of devotees had arisen who advocated new systems of belief, with observances based mainly on the *Puráns*. The older institutions of the *Veds* were thus all gradually displaced or readjusted in a new form. The actual results of the religious struggles to which we have referred was therefore the establishment of Pouránism in its glory; the institution of Monachism which, though not unknown, had never been very prevalent before, being also brought to the fore. The aim of nearly all the philosophers in India had always been the same, namely, to free existent being from the power of evil. They had all acknowledged God in every stage of their development, and continued to do so; and so the *Veds* were honoured. But the philosophers now became professed adherents of the more important Pouránic deities, *e.g.*, Sancaráchárjya of Siva, and Madhaváchárjya and Ballaváchárjya of Vishnu; and, as the contemplation of God, which religions like Buddhism and Vedantism enjoined,

could only be carried on by retired hermits in undisturbed seclusion, asceticism became a virtue and was largely adopted. The Hindu books of the oldest times prescribed a life of solitude and mortification to the devout; but the foundation of regular monastic orders does not date prior to the eighth century after Christ, and some of the orders now existing are not older than the fourteenth century. 'As smoke and various substances,' says Yagnawalcá, instructing Maitreyi, 'separately issue from fire lighted with moist wood, so from the Great Being were respired the *Rig Ved*, the *Yajur Ved*, the *Sám Ved*, the *Atharván* and *Angiras*, the *Itihâses* and the *Puráns*, the sciences and the *Upanishads*, the verses and aphorisms, the expositions and illustrations—all being breathed forth by Him.' Texts of this nature opened a wide field of corruption, and were largely built upon. They conceded full mouth honour to the old Shástras, but exalted at the same time novel doctrines which virtually superseded those of remoter date. The 'verses and aphorisms,' the 'expositions and illustrations,' now became the essential principles of belief, in addition of course to the three hundred and thirty millions creed for the mass. The depositaries of the 'verses and aphorisms,' 'expositions and illustrations,' necessarily became the fathers of the Hindu Church, and these established the Monastic Orders, and opened the great philosophical schools which carried on for several ages the fierce disputations and struggles which Buddhism and Vedantism had inaugurated. The Hindu religion has no visible head, and never had any; but the chiefs of these orders were always regarded with marked veneration and respect, both as the best representatives of the doctrines they upheld, and for contributing largely to the development of learning—including grammar, poetry, and the sciences—in the country. It is scarcely necessary to name all the orders that were thus called forth, but some of them are too important to be silently passed over.

The chief of the religious orders at the present day are: (1) the *Yogis*, (2) the *Sunnyasis*, (3) the *Dundis*, (4) the *Byrágis*,

(5) the *Nágás*, and (6) the *Paramhangsas*. Several other sects also exist; but they do not require separate notice, as they have sprung up only as subdivisions of the primary classes mentioned, and have still many features in common with them. With all the orders the renunciation of the earth has always been the first fundamental creed. Says Menu: 'When the father of a family perceives his muscles become flaccid and his hair gray, and sees the child of his child, let him flee to the forest, committing the care of his wife to her sons, abandoning all worldly concerns, and subsisting on herbs and fruits.' The object of thus renouncing the world is, it is explained, 'to abandon all sensual affections, purify the mind in solitude, and await the appointed time (of absorption with the Supreme Spirit) as a hired servant awaiteth for his wages.' The vow of poverty has also always been a part of this renunciation, and mendicancy necessarily another, which has introduced many abuses into the system, by inducing the ignorant and the abject to put on the appearance of sanctity as a cloak for the beggar's trade. But all the religious mendicants of India in the past were not men of this stamp; there were many amongst them who had much religious feeling, and a great amount of erudition. Originally, these ascetics were almost the sole depositaries of learning in the country, and most of them were much given to study; and, though that high state of the institution was not long preserved, the devotion and austerities of a few are still of a very extraordinary character, and a very respectable share of talent is occasionally even now to be met with among them. Unfortunately, however, the philosophy they teach is on principle incorrect, consisting mainly of the dogmas of either Buddhism and Sankhyaism, or of Vedantism and the other orthodox schools. With all these systems life is evil, and the body the mansion of sickness, sorrow, and sin; and the general rage has therefore always been to mortify the living body, destroy the affections, and discard the duties of life. But still are not all their teachings incorrect? In spite of their metaphysical

perversities and speculations, the Hindu Shástras contain, as we have seen, some of the sublimest sentiments of which human nature is susceptible, and the Indian sages and ascetics have always delighted to teach these to their admirers, but for which teaching they would never have been so deeply venerated. To them also are we indebted for the preservation of many of the ancient writings of the land, and for handing down to us the patriarchal notions of morality which extort the admiration even of those who refuse to accept them in their integrity.

The distinguishing features of the different sects may be briefly noticed as follows:

The *Yogis* are not a powerful body in numbers, but have always been looked upon with veneration and dread by the illiterate and the poor. The god Siva is the object of their worship, and they haunt remote and gloomy desert places to practise their mystic rites and ceremonies. Their discipline exacts total seclusion from the world, and that seclusion includes the renunciation of all worldly sympathies. They are enjoined to live in deserts and wildernesses, that they might be able to devote their lives exclusively to religion; and they accordingly inhabit dismal solitudes tenanted by wolves, bears, and robbers. Here they live and mortify themselves with whips, their beds being often made of iron spikes and thorns, deriving pleasure, as it were, from the very intensity of their mortifications. A few fanatics really do all this; though, of course, much the larger number of those who assume the sect-name do not. The many, as a rule, are content to ape the outward appearance of the stricter few; to rub ashes on their bodies, twist their hair fantastically, and paint their faces. They also make for themselves necklaces of bones, and often carry a human skull with them to keep their food in and to drink from. A large thick club, too, is frequently carried, and used opportunely in the remoter parts of the country to stimulate charity. Their habits are so revolting that they are known to feed even on human flesh, and that in a putrid state. They affect besides

to charm beasts of prey in the wilderness, and to hold carnal commerce with evil spirits, to give a colouring to which pretence they are many times to be seen seated in places where the dead are burnt, in the midst of human bones and skulls, with a small fire before them, and a *lotáh* (their magic caldron) upon it, stirring nameless ingredients, and muttering uncouth spells over them to master powerful charms. By these means they excite the terrors of the vulgar, of which they take every advantage. Many of this sect were found among the Thugs.

The *Sunnyasis* are also followers of Siva, and according to the rules of their order are required to live in desert places, and to subsist on roots and fruits only. This is rarely done at present, but was not uncommon in the past; and much toil and privation are endured even by those who do it not, in travelling over vast tracts of land which for desolation and distance may be regarded as wildernesses. Groups of these wanderers are frequently to be seen all over the country, lodging under large trees, the shady boughs of which serve as a canopy, under which they eat, drink, and sleep contentedly, a small raised hollow made of dried clay holding the fire which boils their culinary ingredients. At night they lie down for the most part on the bare ground, or on little mats, with nothing softer than the roots of trees for their pillows. In this way they stroll, not only over all India, but even over parts of Central Asia; and some are known to have rambled on so far as to Astrakhán and St. Petersburgh. They do not mind their privations, while the liberty of their life they enjoy; and with some these distant journeys are not altogether aimless, as they carry many valuable things in their girdles in which they traffic. Begging is, of course, unavoidable to such a life; but the *Sunnyasis* eschew it as much as they can. Among them are to be found some very clever men. They are required to study the *Veds* constantly, to fix their minds intently on the Supreme Being, to avoid the sight of women, to be always patient, and to be universally benevolent. The rules are much too

difficult to be precisely followed by all, but there is no doubt that the *Sunnyasis* of the past were, as a body, less criminal than members of most of the other orders; and one grade of them—the *Brahmachάris*, or students—are even now famous for their correct lives.

The *Dundis* are a still graver sect, also attached to the worship of Mahádeva. The word *dunda* means a staff, and by the expression *dundagrahan*, or the assumption of a staff, is meant the adoption of a strict moral restraint over the body and the mind. Affecting to have placed themselves under such restraint, the *Dundis* carry a small *dunda*, or wand, as their especial emblem. They are also distinguished by their peculiar clothing, which is always dyed with red ochre. Unlike the other sects, they do not beg indiscriminately. They are, moreover, very rigid in their morals, and all of them labour with their own hands. Many of them are given to study, and manifest a peculiar partiality for the *Vedánta*. There are first-rate scholars among them; but their minds are for the most part of an eccentric turn, and their talents partake of much wildness, if not of idiosyncrasy. Mostly secluded from the world and living retired and absorbed in pious contemplation, they are generally looked upon with fear and respect. The ignorant attribute supernatural powers to them, but they themselves lay claim to none.

The next order is that of the *Byrágis*, who are followers of Vishnu. They profess to practise austerities for attaining the *Byrágya* state, which implies a complete renunciation of appetites and passions. The senses deceive and bewilder; they lead to lust, anger, avarice, and intoxication. The *Byrági*, therefore, endeavours to destroy them, and to estrange himself from the cares and emotions of the world. He exposes himself, accordingly, to the hardships of cold and heat, of hunger and thirst; pinches his flesh with iron pincers; cuts it with knives; suspends himself from a tree over a slow fire: all these being the approved methods laid down in the Shástras for subduing the passions. He also professes perpetual poverty, continence,

and self-denial of every description. The dress assumed by him consists of a small piece of cloth passed through the legs and fixed at each end to a rope girdle. His hairs and nails are allowed to grow to any length, and the body is smeared with ashes; the face being also sometimes streaked with a yellow paint. The figures of these ascetics are generally gaunt and hideous, and a great number of them are erratic in their habits. By far the largest portion of them, however, as they are now seen, are impudent vagrants, and when travelling in parties, they are not unfrequently in the habit of extorting alms from the poor; and in those parts of the country where the eye of the police is not vigilant, instances of robbery, rape, and murder have been laid to their charge.

The *Nágás* and the *Paramhangsas* are in all essential points the same with the *Yogis* and the *Sunnyasis* respectively, and only exceed them in zeal and self-mortification. The appearance of both the orders is respectable and interesting. Their spare diet, their rigorous seclusion, their habits of perseverance and labour, give them a healthy though emaciated look, in which there is no trace of feebleness or squalor, and some of the men have even a lofty and stately bearing. With the greater portion of them, however, the greatest virtue now is affectation, which carries them through their daily practices with ease. They pretend by meditation, mortification, and devotion to have extinguished their passions and identified themselves with the Deity, and often go naked if the magistrate be not too active to allow it. They even affect to be above the necessity of taking any food or drink to replenish their corporeal wants, but always receive them when they are offered to them by their disciples. A pretence of entire abstraction from the world secures them general respect, and in the old days of Hinduism they received considerable deference even from kings, as is exemplified in the story of Sakontolá, in which the *Paramhangsa*, Marichi, receives the attentions of the king. As a rule, however, their present position is simply that of beggars, though some of those favoured

by the great have been known to live in comparative pomp and magnificence.

The above enumerated orders, though differing in their peculiarities in certain respects, do not, now at least, differ essentially from each other in their modes of life. Their dress, habits, and vows greatly resemble; and they all pretend to a devotion to religion as their excuse for neglecting their worldly ties and duties, though in most cases the inability to endure the disappointments and distresses of life is the real cause of their asceticism. Abandoning kith, kin, and friends, they also repudiate marriage as an unholy ordinance, possibly from an innate fondness for the liberty that celibacy allows them. The original ascetics, the founders of their respective orders, must have really been purer men than their present followers, and doubtless did prefer a life of continence, and feel an honest pride in showing their superiority over the cravings of the flesh, if only to put themselves in marked contrast with the general mass of mankind. In single blessedness, vanquishing all amatory desires, the sage taught in practice that renunciation of the passions which he preached to his disciples from the Shástras, and the example thus shown began perhaps to be valued and generally adopted for its very uniqueness. To make it an essential virtue of monachism was but one step forward in error, and the comforts of life once cast aside are actually seldom found to be indispensable to existence. But in none of the sects are men of this stamp to be now very plentifully met with.

All these religious orders started into existence with the struggles which divided the Bráhmans amongst themselves, and from the Buddhists; and they were perpetuated as the last landmarks of those struggles after they were terminated. To the illiterate multitude these recluses were for centuries the leaders and missionaries of religion, who personally held up examples of purity for imitation. Eventually, however, they declined, both in morals and learning, and then were introduced those impure rites and

emblems of worship for which the Hindu religion has since become best known. If the earlier ascetics did service to the cause of religion by their lives, there is no doubt that their subsequent followers have most effectually undermined it by introducing all the distortions which now disfigure the national creed.

## CHAPTER VII.

### CASTE; ITS NATURE AND ORIGIN.

The most remarkable institution connected with the civil transitions in India is caste, which, in one sense of the word, may be said to be peculiar to it. It is not that it was unknown to other countries of the ancient world. Without being irreverent we may fancy that we find traces of it in the pages of the Bible;* and there is no doubt that it was well understood, though for comparatively short periods only, by the Egyptians and Assyrians; the Greeks, Cretans, and Persians; and even the Anglo-Saxons and the aborigines of Mexico and Peru. But, excepting Egypt, the traces of the institution were in no place so deeply indented as in India, nor the foundations of it so authoritatively laid down; and in the present day it is not recognised in any other country in any quarter of the globe.

The origin of caste in India has been the subject of much conjecture and inquiry, and many fanciful theories have been set up to account for it. One of these discovers that the Sanskrit expression for caste is the same as that for colour, *i.e.*, *Barna*, and at once jumps to the conclusion that the Bráhmans were of a different colour from the *dasyas*, and necessarily of a foreign origin, and that this was also true of the other intermediate classes. The other theories generally, without attaching equal importance to complexionary evidence, consider the proofs of foreign

* Genesis iv. 20—22.

conquests to be convincing and abundant, and on that assumption transplant the Scythic tribes of the Jaxartes, one after another, to the delta of the Ganges and the Jumná, assigning to each horde a separate caste, and to the last comers—as victors over all—the highest position. The need for these conjectures is, however, not very apparent; they are not supported by any proof of much importance; and the evidence of the Hindu Shástras is directly opposed to them, which, to our thinking, ought to be conclusive against them.

The accounts given by the Shástras are various, as indeed they are almost on every subject, and to that extent they may be said to be disaccordant; but not one of them gives to caste a foreign origin. The *Rig Ved* says that the first being born was Viráj Purush, who being cut up, the Bráhman was born from his mouth, the Rájanga from his arms, the Vaisya from his thighs, and the Sudra from his feet; while the Sun, Moon, Indra, and Agni were generated from other members of his body. Menu's account is very similar. That the human race might be multiplied the Supreme Ruler, he says, caused the Bráhman, Kshetriya, Vaisya, and Sudra to proceed from his mouth, arm, thigh, and foot respectively, after which he assigned them several duties. The account of the *Vrihad Aranyacá Upanishad* is also in the same strain. Bruhmá, it says, first created the Bráhmans alone, but did not enjoy a state of things in which there were no diversities of occupation and character. He therefore created the Kshetriyas for the protection of the world. But even this did not fully meet the want he wished to provide for, which made him add the Vaisyas to the number of his creations, the duty of acquiring wealth being assigned to them. There still remained a further gap to fill up, for there were no servants in existence, and to meet this requirement he created the Sudras. All these accounts pronounce the creation of the four primary castes to have been at least nearly simultaneous and indigenous; they leave no room for the supposition of successive conquests by foreign races. The *Vishnu Purán* says that

the fourfold institution was created by Bruhmá for the performance of sacrifices, for which it was an excellent instrument; and that the castes produced were characterized by different *goonas*, or qualities, the Bráhman being characterized by *Satyagoona*, or goodness, the Kshetriya by *Rajagoona*, or passion, the Vaisya by *Tamagoona*, or pride, and the Sudra by darkness. And the *Mahábhárut* asserts that there is no real difference of castes: this world being created by Bruhmá was entirely Bráhmanic; it became afterwards separated into castes in consequence of works. The fiery, irascible Bráhmans became Kshetriyas; the Bráhmans who derived their livelihood from kine became Vaisyas; those who were addicted to falsehood and mischief were Sudras.

It is clear from this evidence that caste was only the result of the expansion of the Vedic people from the banks of the Indus eastward and southward, whereby the *dasyas*, or aboriginal tribes, were reduced, which rendered it essential that the Bráhmans and the races they conquered should be distinguished in some manner from outer barbarians. The first thing to be done, therefore, was to classify the conquerors according to the duties which their conquests imposed on them; and the first three castes were thus called forth, being simply gradations in the body politic, rendered necessary by the acquisition of an empire. There was no distinction of races, no congenital diversity between them. The original Bráhmans were a thoughtful and contemplative people, and such of their descendants as still preserved that character were now separated from the rest by being expressly made priests, and devoted themselves henceforth exclusively to the worship of the gods and a religious life, retaining their old generic name. On the other hand, the more enterprising and warlike members of the community, who had conquered the *dasyas*, assumed that authority over their fellow-men which was in a manner forced on them by their altered life; and these became the Kshetriyas, or kingly race, which, at the outset at least, took precedence of the Bráhmans. The great mass

of the people at the same time betook themselves, under the name of Vaisyas, to the occupations of trade and husbandry, for which the sphere had widened; but, position apart, they continued to share several privileges in common with the Bráhmans and Kshetriyas, such as reading the scriptures and worshipping their guardian deities without the intervention of the priesthood, these having descended to them as their birthrights. The conquered *dasyas*, wishing to be incorporated with the rest, were also admitted into society, but only either as slaves, or as handicraftsmen of the lowest description, the proud Bráhman refusing relationship or alliance with him, or to allow him a share in any of his exclusive privileges. As for Scythic conquests and immigrations, there is no doubt that there were many, and it is possible that some new castes of the lowest grades (*i.e.* Barnasankars, or the mixed races) were introduced by them; but the fourfold system, which originated with the *Veds*, was apparently known to India in matured perfection long before the era of those conquests.

The distinctions of caste in the Vedic era were undefined. The Bráhmans are spoken of as the highest in the rank of precedence; but there was not at the outset much real difference between them and the Kshetriyas and Vaisyas. In fact, apparently, the Kshetriyas were the ruling power to commence with, and the precedence conceded to the Bráhmans had reference only to their superior piety and virtue. The assumption of political authority by the Bráhmans does not date prior to the era of Parusrám, throughout which period prolonged wars were maintained mainly on account of the Kshetriyas being aided, not only by the Vaisyas, but also by the Sudras. It was after the final defeat of the Kshetriyas that the Bráhmans sat down to frame cruel and stringent rules, which were made particularly so to the *dasyas*, who, they held, had no business to interfere in their family differences.

The subsequent degeneracy of the Hindu religion led to the intervals between the different classes being still further widened, when the regulations recorded by Menu were

matured. Even by them, however, though the Bráhmans were elevated above the other classes, the community to be governed was explicitly shown to be composed of the first three classes, which indicated their common relationship with each other; and large powers were left with both the Kshetriyas and the Vaisyas. The Kshetriyas had still the high honour conceded to them of protecting the earth, the cattle, and the clergy, and of fighting to death in vindication of their trust. 'A Kshetriya,' says Krishna to Arjun, in the *Gítá*, 'has no duty superior to fighting. If thou art slain, thou wilt obtain heaven; if thou art victorious, thou wilt enjoy a world.' The sphere of the Vaisyas was yet more useful, the whole commerce of the country being left in their hands.

As regards the Sudras, Menu apparently did not care to notice them on their own account, considering them to be useful only so far as they contributed to the advantage or convenience of the higher classes. He accordingly laid down that the only duty of the Sudra on earth was servitude, and especially under the Bráhmans; that whether bought, or unbought, he could be compelled to perform menial duty; that no collection of wealth by him was allowable, lest it should give pain to Bráhmans; and that the religious penance for killing him was no greater than that for killing a cat, a dog, a frog, and a lizard. The abhorrence in which the conquered race was held could not well have been more strongly expressed; though, of course, the prescripts of the law were never fully accepted or enforced. The *Institutes* are generally held rather as an ideal of what the Bráhmans wished, than what they were able, to enforce; and, in point of fact, the Sudras at the time of the legislator were apparently much better off than they had ever been before, the prolonged wars of the Bráhmans and the Kshetriyas having given them the opportunity to achieve their freedom. For all the severity of Menu's texts it would not be right, therefore, to conclude that the actual condition of the Sudras, even in his age, was worse than, or as bad as, that of the villeins under

the feudal system, or of the helots in Greece. Menu expressly says that the Sudras were not only not to read the *Veds*, but were also not to hear them read to them; and yet a reference to the most important of the Scriptures, the *Rig Ved*, shows that some of its *Suktas* were composed by a Sudra named Kanasha Ailusha, a clear proof that the perverse discrimination enjoined by the law was never actually observed. The Sudra's right to property was always admitted, and, apart from the text quoted, is admitted in Menu's code itself; and the law also extended its protection to his person, notwithstanding the flimsy penance prescribed by it in the event of his being killed.

The *dasyas*, after the conquest of Hindustán Proper by the Bráhmans, formed the bulk of the Sudra class; but there is clear evidence to show that the nucleus of the class was otherwise formed. We read in the *Vishnu Purán* that Prishdra became a Sudra from having killed his *gooroo's* cow. Menu also says that the Bráhman who, not having studied the *Veds*, applies diligent attention to a different and worldly study, soon falls to the condition of a Sudra, and his descendants after him. It may be presumed from these statements that the original fourth class was formed by the degradation of delinquents from the higher grades, which probably accounts for the circumstance of particular races descended from the same stock with the Bráhmans being now classified below them. This is especially the case with the Káyasths of Bengal, who object to their being classified with the Sudras, but have no distinct position assigned to them. They are of the same *gotra*, or stock, with the Bráhmans, which the Bráhmans account for by asserting that the Káyasths accepted the *gotras* of their spiritual teachers. But both tradition and the *Puráns* indicate with sufficient clearness that the descent of the two classes was originally from the same source.

The law relating to the Sudras was, we have seen, very severe, the severest of all prescriptions against them being

the one we have cited, namely, that they were not only not allowed to read the Scriptures, but were prevented from obtaining instruction in them from others. The *Itiháses* and *Puráns* only were left to them, in common with the other classes, for the attainment of perfection; but it was a great concession that the law held them eligible to promotion if perfection was attained. 'Pure in body and mind, humbly serving the higher classes, mild in speech, never arrogant, ever seeking refuge in Bráhmans principally, the Sudra,' says Menu, 'may attain the most eminent class.' But this concession was apparently withdrawn immediately after the age of Menu, for Culluca, his commentator, adds to the text the significant words—'in another transmigration' only. In the olden days, however, the instances of such elevations were many. Achalá Muni, says the *Vajra Suchi*, was born of an elephant, Kesa Pingala of an owl, Agastya Muni from the Agasti flower, Kausika from the *kusá* grass, Kapila from a monkey, Gautama from a creeper, Drona Áchárjya from an earthen pot, Taittri Rishi from a partridge, Parusrám from dust, Sringa Rishi from a deer, Vashista from a courtezan, and Nárad Muni from a female spirit-seller. It is difficult, indeed, clearly to understand the allegorical meaning of an elephant, an owl, a flower, a blade of grass, a monkey, a creeper, a pot, a bird, dust, and a deer, in connection with the birth of the sages named; but it is clear that these oriental metaphors were only meant to cover their low origin. Yet all these individuals were Bráhmans. It were vain to urge that the defect of their birth was probably merely on the mother's side. Such an assertion would be contrary to the spirit of the Shástras, which class the Vaidyas, Naishádas, and Murdhabhishiktas with the impurer tribes; and Menu clearly mentions that 'they only who are born in a direct order of wives *equal in class*, and virgins at the time of marriage, are to be considered as the same in class with their fathers.' If it be urged that none of them were Sudras by birth, but were probably Kshetriyas or Vaisyas, who were congenitally of the same rank with

the Bráhmans, we have still the instance of Válmik to fall back upon, as he was undoubtedly a Sudra who raised himself to the highest class by the force of his talents and austerities. This shows that, notwithstanding all prescriptions to the contrary, the original restrictions of caste were not so precise and arbitrary as the after-legislation of Menu and others would lead us to suppose. The fact is that, though the Bráhmans purposely degraded the *dasyas* by assigning them the lowest place in civil society, they felt that it would materially improve their own interests to allow the best and brightest specimens of the conquered race to rank and associate with themselves, a lesson which the English conquerors of the country have not yet fully appreciated.

The last rank in the social scale, according to Menu, was that occupied by the Barnasankars, or the casteless, the progeny of unholy alliances, which the restrictions of the Shástras were unable to prevent. Fortune and beauty held out many temptations which religion was not strong enough to resist; and the very first delinquents were probably the Bráhmans themselves, who set aside their own anathemas for the dusky charms of *dasya* damsels. The thirteenth verse of the third chapter of Menu gives the higher classes the privilege of marrying women of the lower orders; but this license was granted apparently only to legitimize the issue born of such unions, without conceding to them equality of status and position. Nor was the privilege long continued, as such marriages have been held to be illegal for many centuries now. But, besides these, other clandestine unions took place, by which the casteless race was mainly strengthened.

Even in the age of Menu the class thus formed comprised a numerous body; and the necessities of society having intermediately extended beyond the narrow limits within which they were formerly confined, the legislator was obliged to classify the Barnasankars, and to enlist them in the service of the community by assigning to them the lower duties of life. Thirty-six branches of these are

generally mentioned in the sacred books, though some authorities give a different number. According to the *Játi-málá*, or *Garland of Classes*, an extract of the *Rudramálá Tantra*, the chief of these classes are: (1) Murdhabhi-shikta, born of a Bráhman and a daughter of the Kshetriya class, whose duty is limited to the teaching of military exercises; (2) Vaidya, or doctor, sprung from a Vaisya woman and a Bráhman; (3) Naishāda, or fisherman, born of a female Sudra and a priest; (4) Mahishya, whose profession is declared to be music, astronomy, and cattle-herding! sprung from a Kshetriya and a girl of the Vaisya tribe; (5) Agra, condemned by Menu to the duty of killing and confining such animals as live in holes, but according to the *Tantra* gifted with the sacred inspiration of poetry, born of a Sudra woman and a man of the warrior tribe; (6) Karana, or Káyasth, professionally a courtier or a scribe, born of a Vaisya and a Sudráni; (7) Suta, or ostler and charioteer, begotten by a Kshetriya on a woman of the priestly order; (8) Magadha, or itinerant trader, born of a daughter of the military class and a Vaisya; (9) Vaideha, sprung from a woman of the Bráhman class and a man of the merchant tribe, degraded to wait on women; (10) Ayogáva, born of a Vaisya woman and a Sudra, having the profession of a carpenter assigned to him; and so on, till we come to the Chandál, sprung from a girl of the Bráhman class and a Sudra, whom all authorities concur in placing at the bottom of the list. In this arrangement, from the different ranks assigned to the offsprings noticed, it will be perceived that Bráhmanical ingenuity attached to female infidelity different shades of guilt, varying, not according to the circumstances of their temptation, but according to the rank of the parties with whom they were unhappily connected. In the same spirit Menu classes the sons of women only one degree lower than their lovers—namely, the Murdhabhishikta, the Mahishya, and the Karana or Káyasth—in the first grade; while he places the sons of women two or three degrees below their lovers in a lower grade with others, and, placing the Vaidyas at their head,

mentions the Naisháda, Agra, Suta, Magadha, Vaideha, Ayogáva, and Chandál in succession. All the occupations which the sagacity of the Shástras had not previously provided for were distributed among these tribes, which probably remained for some time in great isolation, till they got mixed with the Sudras and made common cause with them. Eventually, the Kshetriyas and the Vaisyas also were merged in them, whereby all the lower classes were mixed together, which virtually divided the community into the two grand divisions of Bráhmans and Barnasankars. In the same way the duties assigned to the several orders got jumbled, though not to the same extent. The law chalked out the duties of life for every class, the station of every individual was unalterably fixed, and insurmountable barriers were set up to withhold them from mixing with each other. But, in the same breath, it was also prescribed that the Bráhman, unable to subsist by his sacerdotal duties, was at liberty to take up the duties of the Kshetriya, Vaisya, and Sudra; the Kshetriya, in like circumstances, to descend to the duties of the Vaisya and Sudra; the Vaisya, to those of the Sudra; and the Sudra, to those of the impurer castes: and, when all the orders got mixed so far as to admit of a community of interests, the labours and employments assigned to them necessarily got confounded to a considerable degree. As the law did not, however, permit any general ascent to the Bráhman class, the duties and employments of that class were never interfered with. The advantages were all on the stronger side; and with the stronger side they were continued. The higher orders were allowed to overload the lower orders with additional labourers whenever they chose to do so; but no encroachment on the rights of the first grade was permitted, or was ever attempted.

The rights which were given to the Bráhman he has thus retained to this day. The text says that the Bráhman 'is a powerful divinity, whether consecrated or popular'; and so the position he assumed when the *Bráhmanas* of the *Veds* were written has been preserved, notwithstanding that he has declined considerably since then, both in piety

and learning. Ignorance and crime in the Bráhmans are strongly condemned by the Shástras; but for no crime and no ignorance are they to forfeit the respect of the lower classes. Virtually, then, the great object kept in view by the *rishis* in organizing the distinctions of caste after the conquest of the *dasyas*, namely, the assumption of a superior standing over the conquered races, has, through all the vicissitudes which the institution has passed through, been maintained, with all rights and privileges appertaining thereto, except such as foreign supremacy has necessarily negatived. The Bráhman, according to the law, is the chief of the whole creation; his very birth is a constant incarnation of Dharma; all things existing in the universe belong to him; liberality to him is made incumbent on every virtuous man, and is an especial duty of the king; his life and person are protected by the severest enactments; he can never be forced to become a slave; the king is not to provoke his anger; the magistrates are not to imagine evil in their hearts against him; and the public at large have but one duty, to minister to his appetites in every way practicable. This pre-eminence he certainly still enjoys with every orthodox Hindu, though the Englishman may not allow him to enforce it legally. What time has destroyed are only the barriers which were set up between the remaining classes to keep them apart from each other. Even this were a great gain, if the destruction had been complete; but, while the Kshetriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras have so mixed up with the Barnasankars that they cannot be separately distinguished, the old leaven has soured the whole dough, which has led the Barnasankars to redivide themselves into a lot of minor classes that affect to keep separate from each other, and sharply dispute for precedence among themselves. Instead of four divisions there are now more than forty, which, for all social purposes at least, are as distinct from each other as the Kshetriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras ever were. What they all agree in is in rendering honour and obeisance to the Bráhmans, which no stage of civilisation and no political

convulsions have materially disturbed. The only vigorous effort to throw off the Bráhman yoke was that made by the Buddhas, which was unsuccessful. Chaitanya took up the contest after them, but his success was not considerable; and the Vysnubs now, though they still renounce caste in theory, seldom do so in practice.

The question of Bráhman precedence has, however, another phase which must not be overlooked. The code of Menu, which conceded so many privileges to the Bráhman, prescribed to him at the same time a life of study, retirement, and austerity, such as left no leisure for the pursuit of ambition. Even for daily food and raiment he was left dependent on the attachment and veneration of the other classes; and, as a class, the Bráhmans always evinced the greatest disregard for wealth, though not for other worldly advantages. They represented the sovereign on the bench; they interpreted the laws; they expounded the sacred books, which the Kshetriyas and the Vaisyas were barely allowed to read; they were the only intercessors with heaven; through them only were offerings to be rendered; they alone could preside over rites and ceremonies. But they did not gain substantially by the elevation thus secured to them; they received no presents but of rent-free lands, and cows, and grains, except from kings, who occasionally gave them also chariots, horses, and lumps of gold. They were exempt, indeed, from taxation and similar contributions, but that was hardly a concession to a class that had no money to pay. If the law gave them a moiety of all treasure-troves forfeited to the government, we may take it for granted that such forfeitures were extremely rare.

The Bráhmans were the earthly gods of the country—its *devatás*; an evil of enormous magnitude, as we find it in our day, but an evil that did much good work in the past as a repressing authority amid the convulsions the country passed through; an evil that secured civilisation and learning for a series of centuries, though in a stereotyped form. Even now every Bráhman is a gentleman. Long

ages of supremacy have given him an easy dignity, which all his poverty has not taken away from him. Even those Bráhmans who are degraded to menial offices, such as sircárs and cooks, do not descend to the same servility as servants of other castes. The subjection of the lower orders to them continues, mainly because those orders are less educated than the Bráhmans. Except the Káyasth and the Vaidya, no one approaches the Bráhman within a respectable distance in knowledge; and even the youths of the rising generation, who contemn caste, are content to make their *pronám* to the haughty descendants of the *rishis*, albeit it is not one of such reverence as they were accustomed to receive in the past.

There is still another phase of the question to be understood. The laws condemned the Sudras and the Barnasankars to contempt; but, practically, within a short time after the age of Menu, we find individuals of those classes figuring often as the king's advisers, and not seldom as the occupants of thrones; while, as a rule, the classes seem always to have included men of substance and power, against whom such laws as Menu laid down were necessarily inoperative. The artificial divisions of the code existed, in fact, only on the paper on which they were written. It was not possible to enforce them fully without convulsing the framework of society; and it does not appear that any attempt to enforce them strictly was ever made. They existed on record, but the intercourse of society was regulated by opinion.

The caste system came into active operation at about the same time that Vyasa began to compile the *Veds*, and hence the allusions to it that are to be met with in those records. But the very nature of those allusions establishes clearly that the system had not then attained any maturity of growth. The code of Menu was compiled in the age of Bhrigu, about B.C. 900, by which time the confusion of classes had already given rise to the formation of the impurer castes, so that the duration of the first pure stage of the system must have been very brief. But though it did

not abide long in its purity, it has retained a turbid vitality for not less than two thousand and eight hundred years, and up to this moment shows no signs of decay.

Besides the Hindu tribes there are many races living in the country in an isolated condition who claim the name of Hindus but deny the authority of the *Veds* and the *Puráns*, disregard the institution of castes, and differ greatly from the bulk of the people. These, it is to be presumed, are the descendants of the aboriginal *dasyas* who did not accept degradation and the name of *Sudra* from the Bráhmans. Their number now, as then, is very inconsiderable; but, far from caste being abandoned in a hurry, it looks as if these are gravitating towards its rules and observances.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### HINDU GOVERNMENT.

OF the government of the ancient Hindus no historical details have come down to us; but the political status of the people can be correctly understood by examining their social position, ample information in regard to which is to be found in the *Veds*. Even the *Rig Ved* helps us to discover that before the end of the Vedic age the people had already settled down into fixed dwellings, villages, and towns; had taken to agriculture, manufacture, and navigation; and had formed themselves into municipal corporations, akin almost to principalities.

The life of the Bráhman at this stage was simple and patriarchal; his chief employments were agriculture and the care of cattle; corn and herds his chief wealth. The horse was domesticated; buffaloes, goats, and sheep were owned: but the cow was of all animals the best prized. The cow was the constant burden of praise; the sky was compared to her, the clouds to her udder, the rain to her milk. The earth was also compared to her, and her milk was as well esteemed as food-grains. Of all presents the present of cows was most valued; but the cow was not yet worshipped. She was valued only for supplying the householder with milk, butter, curds, and cheese. The Bráhman also fed on cow's flesh, and the *Rig Ved* speaks of it as his principal food; the oxen ploughed his fields; the hides of cows and oxen covered his chariot and made the thongs by which it was held fast. The chief grain-food of the

people consisted of barley and millet. Their manufactures comprised chariots, carts, and waggons; armour of all sorts —such as lances, javelins, arrows, swords, helmets, and cuirasses—were also made; iron was in common use among them, and gold was worn in the shape of collars, bracelets, and rings.

The home of the Bráhman was strongly built; the *Rig Ved* frequently alludes to houses, and compares the sky to a hall with a thousand columns, so that the idea of spacious halls had been acquired, apparently from the *dasyas*. There were also villages and towns, 'stone-built cities' and 'strong-built cities' being frequently mentioned; roads and ferries are alluded to; even sea-going ships and navigation in the open sea are spoken of, though the Bráhman himself was not a seaman. He was only an agriculturist, a warrior, and a priest. No temple for his gods is ever referred to; worship was mainly domestic, and consisted of offerings, prayers, and praise—the first being chiefly in the shape of oblations and libations. No one was forbidden to read or hear the *Veds*, not even women; and the *rishi* generally had but one wife, though cases of polygamy are mentioned, *e.g.*, that of Kakshipat, who married ten sisters at one and the same time.

This was the first stage of civilisation. At this time all the customs and avocations of the people exhibit a marked contempt for political power. The greatest characters among them are always represented either as warriors or saints, or as both, of which character were Bhavya, who dwelt on the banks of the Indus, and Chitra, who lived near the Seraswati; and also the ten kings who fought against Sudás. The principle of self-government by small communities was, however, already understood, which gave to the administration a vigorous and moral tone, and to each village a completeness within itself. Each community had its own head, its own tradesmen, its own council, its own supply of grain, and its own supply of water in wells, tanks, and reservoirs. The villager scarcely cared for the king. He had certain duties to perform and

certain contributions to pay, and cheerfully rendered unto Cæsar what was due to him. But all his affections and sympathies were with the chief who led him on to war. Of dynastic changes no traces are discernible; kings are alluded to, but little is said of them.

With the age of the *Puráns* the two great dynasties of the Sun and Moon branched off into separate kingdoms; but of the actual state of the government no direct proof is yet forthcoming, all the accounts of political power being mixed up with astounding legends barely held together by the use of a few Vedic names. It is now that the ruler of a country is exalted into a terrible divinity, who, like the sun, burns eyes and hearts, and on whom no human creature can gaze and live, though, as a matter of fact, most of the rulers regarding whom particulars are given figure only as imbecile sovereigns, almost always under tutelage. The ideal form of government indicated seems to make the king supreme, but the details, where given, invariably represent him as being in all civil matters entirely led by those who advise him. As a rule, he figures merely as a warrior, who leads his people to conquests—those conquests by which the whole peninsula was mastered. In the nature of things equitable and humane rulers must of course have existed, and the inference that they did so is supported by the fact of royal virtues being much extolled in the poems and legends that emanated with the *Purâns*. The character given to the king in these is generally that of 'father of his people,' which doubtless was his real character in very olden times.

We next come to the age of Menu, by which period the country had already become partitioned into states, probably from local peculiarities, possibly from conquests effected under different leaders. The internal organization of the different states was, however, generally the same, every state having the uniform divisions of kings, priesthood, warriors, and slaves. The question has been raised whether under this distribution the king was not a despot, and that he was not has been proved by the facts that he

was personally amenable to the laws, and was not himself a lawgiver. He is indeed expressly declared to be absolute and subject to no legal control, but he is in the same breath declared liable to fine and imprisonment. The object of having a king, says Menu, is to restrain violence and punish evil-doers; and the law certainly did not contemplate that the officer thus set up should himself create those very evils which he was appointed to put down.

The dominion of the king was, besides, broken up into the old subdivisions of towns and villages, which in one sense were almost independent of him, each town and village having a lord set over it, respectively named *poor-pati* and *grámani*, over several of whom again there was an elective vicegerent, who was only nominally under royal control. These townships were the centres of pergunnáhs and provinces, each being well defined, fortified, and protected. They all cónducted their own internal affairs, including the collection of revenue, management of police, and administration of justice. All taxes were assessed by themselves, and their own expenses were similarly regulated. Even the officers in their service were all selected by them, the set consisting usually of the headman, the accountant, the banker, the priest, the schoolmaster, the physician, the watchman, the barber, the washerman, and the potter, all of whom were paid by fees, frequently given in kind. This conformation enabled the people to be almost independent of their sovereigns, and to defy those with impunity who were disposed to be tyrannical. The headman only corresponded with the government, which the rest did not even care to know of, while they always supported their officers against the royal power whenever it ventured to interfere with them unduly. The arrangement was so good that it was preserved by its own force, even after the downfall of the Hindu power, and contributed most to the preservation of Hinduism under the Mahomedan yoke. For a long time all rights and properties were held by these communities

in common, but this disposition was eventually broken through by the subdivision of property by inheritance.

Apart from these arrangements the power of the king was doubtless still very extensive; but he was assisted in the exercise of it by his councillors, who always relieved him of it considerably. His ordinary every-day ministers were generally of the military class, to whom belonged the command of armies and all situations of authority; but he was also enjoined to consult the Bráhmans in matters of justice, policy, and theology, and the lower classes in matters connected with agriculture, commerce, and the practical arts. Over and above these, the hierarchy sat as a council of appeal in all matters, but mainly to interpret the laws. This was the procedure alike in every state, the variations caused by differences in habits, customs, and local by-laws, where such existed, being very inconsiderable, except where the aboriginal inhabitants, the *dasyas*, maintained their independence on the outskirts of hills and forests, in antagonism to the conquering power, from whom they necessarily differed in every respect, and by whom they were, therefore, courteously classified as monkeys, bears, and rakshases.

The power of the Bráhmans in the state was very great; but it did not amount to a theocracy, as is generally assumed. The Bráhman placed himself above the other classes; but, just as he believed of God, that He did not allow Himself to be disturbed by the cares and anxieties of government, even so he also disencumbered himself of those cares by reposing them on others. During the best part of a Bráhman's life the law in fact required him to live secluded from the world, while a great portion of the remainder was taken up with the reading of the *Veds* and the performance of ceremonies. He could not therefore have really interfered very largely in secular affairs, even if he had wished it; and virtually he seems to have reserved to himself only the interpretation of the laws, which it was necessary for him to retain to strengthen his nominal supremacy. By the Bráhmanical system itself, the

Kshetriya was the man really in power, and after him the Vaisya. The political duties which devolved on the Bráhman by law he never discharged.

The sources of revenue in the states in Menu's time were few. The produce of land paid a tax; commerce had imposts imposed on it, and trades and professions a license-fee; a large share of the mineral wealth of the country also belonged to the king; and, over and above all this, he was entitled to a forced service of one day in the month from every handicraftsman. But both the assessment of rates and the enforcement of labour were regulated by the village communities; there was no room left to the king for extortion, even if he were disposed to be extortionate. The municipalities were in all respects self-governed, though, of course, nominally under royal subjection. The authority of the king, therefore, though often extravagantly described, was in reality considerably limited.

The king's chief duty was the administration of justice, though in remote places even this had to be discharged by his representatives. When he undertook the work himself he did not decide without consulting persons learned in the law, and, as the Bráhman only was presumed to have this learning, the Shástras declared him to be the final referee. In reality, however, the Bráhman, far from being the minister, adviser, or referee of the king, was often only his steward, butler, or keeper of the wardrobe, while the real adviser and referee was some despised Sudra, who had no rights or privileges by law, but who had what was more effectual, the support of whole towns and districts, which the ruler, however exalted by the law, could not venture to over-ride. The practice in this respect seems, however, to have varied largely in different places and periods, and this probably accounts for the glaring contradictions recorded in respect to it in the pages of Menu, where all the different procedures appear to have been jumbled together.

The law in its minuteness, as laid down by Menu, was

never actually in force. The real character of royal duties is better exhibited in the *Mahábhárut*, where it is more than insinuated that the approval of his subjects is the sovereign's best praise. So also in the *Rámáyana*, Ráma was selected *Joobráj*, or heir-apparent, in deference to the wishes of the people. Robertson's estimate is, therefore, right, that, as a rule, the sovereigns of India were not possessed of uncontrolled or despotic power. The restrictions which limited their power were not indeed legal, but they were well understood; just as the jurisdiction of a father is understood without being precisely defined. The paternal character of the government was probably not long maintained; but the sovereigns for the most part, even after it had ceased, regarded their own welfare to be very nearly connected with the welfare of their subjects.

The every-day routine of royal life is thus given by Ward, on the authority of the *Mahábhárut*:—'The king was awakened in the morning before daybreak, by an officer of his household, who reminded him of his religion and kingly duties. Then the pages in waiting repeated the customary flatteries, and the Bráhmans, as he went out, rehearsed the praises of the gods. He next bathed, and worshipped his guardian deity, when the praises of the gods were again chanted. Then he drank a little water,* and caused alms to be distributed to the poor. These duties performed, he entered his assembled court and took his seat, having his relatives and the Bráhmans on his right hand, and the other castes on his left, and his ministers and councillors near him. At a distance in front stood those who chanted the praises of the gods and of the king, and with them the charioteers, elephanteers, horsemen, and men of valour. Men of learning had likewise their place in this assembly, but mixed up with riding-masters, tasters, mimics, mountebanks; and the like. The monarch dined at noon, after which he was amused by singers and dancing-girls. He then retired, invoking his

* This is a singular mistake of Ward's: *jalpán* means a light breakfast.

guardian deity, visited the temples, saluted the gods, and conversed with the priests; and, after resting a little in the company of learned, wise, and pious men, he spent the evening in conversation and in reviewing the business of the day. During the night he went abroad in disguise, or learnt from spies of every description the state of his kingdom. It was moreover his duty to pursue every object till it was accomplished, to succour his dependents, and to be hospitable to his guests. His lawful amusements were hunting and visiting his pleasure-gardens.'

This, we may take it, was very near the actual character of the administration India had for upwards of a thousand years. The king was at the head of the government, but under the direction of a priesthood that was neither strong enough nor ever much disposed to embarrass him. His councillors, generally chosen from all classes at random, were dependent on his power; but the people governed by him, who had helped him to his conquests, were in all but name his supporters, not his slaves; and the despotism pure and simple, as described by law, was qualified by the deference he was compelled to pay to the wishes of his supporters. Theoretically, the people were nowhere; their recognised position being that only of tillers of the ground, hewers of wood, and drawers of water. The laws and ordinances of the country stated emphatically that this was so; but such laws were necessarily inoperative. The same laws declared the Bráhman to be the lord of the creation, and the Kshetriya to be the master of the world; but the hewers of wood and the drawers of water became the real masters of the position after the exterminating wars of Parusrám, and those who had before asserted their supremacy over them were thenceforth only too glad to pay deference to them, even kings paying court to those by whose sufferance they reigned. Spiritual despotism, therefore, if it did exist at any time, had but a brief duration, and did not revive, except for short intervals, at different eras. By the abler princes the book-prescriptions were always ignored; and

those who were imbecile were for the most part entirely led by the superior officers of the government, among whom many were Sudras. That the Sudras had grown powerful, and had even attained sovereign rank early enough, is to be gathered from that very code which dooms them to perpetual servitude. 'Let not a Bráhman,' says Menu, 'dwell in a city governed by a Sudra king;' and, again, he speaks of 'whole territories inhabited by Sudras, overwhelmed with atheists, and deprived of Bráhmans:' so that there were cities and territories in his time which were governed by Sudra kings, and wholly occupied by Sudras.

During the decline of the Hindu power, the rule of the Sudras became yet more common. Long before the beginning of the Christian era, the rule of the Kshetriyas is found to be exceptional, and individuals of all castes, not excepting the *dasyas*, are seen at random raised to the thrones of Magadha, Alláhábád, Mathoorá, and Kanouj. So also the Guptas, or Vaidyas, a mixed race, occupied the thrones of Kalinga and Gour; the Gohos, or Sudras, the throne of Banga; the *goáláhs*, or cowherds, the thrones of Surát, Márwár and Oujein; and the *Mlech'has*, or barbarians, the thrones of all the countries along the Indus and Cashmere. This general revolution, however, was not the normal condition of the country. It was rather the effect of the teachings of Buddhism, the expiring energies of which were exhausted in pulling down the orthodox institutions of Hinduism. This admitted, it may still be affirmed that the government, even in the era when the Bráhman power was most dominant, was not exclusively Bráhman, and that the administrative system was never so defective as the prescriptions laid down by Menu would seem to indicate. The actual administration of the country was much more enlightened than the Bráhman legislator had the wit to prescribe. The people were doubtless tyrannised over whenever it was possible to deal with them in that way with impunity; but such treatment among a nation of soldiers and conquerors, which the Hindus at this

time undoubtedly were, was not often either safe or feasible. The actual power of the people was too great to be wantonly provoked; and, though despotism was the abstract character of the rule in force all over the country, it was not such a despotism as the Mahomedans, and the English after them, introduced. It is nothing to say that the specimens of Hindu administration, still to be seen in the country, are as bad as can well be conceived. Of course they are so; but they are all Mahomedan imitations, not examples of Hindu rule as it existed in the past.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE CONQUEST OF INDIA BY THE MAHOMEDANS, AND THE HISTORY OF THEIR RULE OVER THE COUNTRY.

THE Mahomedan conquest of India introduced many changes in the country, and requires to be particularly noticed. It was effected after the Káliphat had lost its glory, by soldiers of fortune who availed themselves of the confusion of the times to become independent. One of the great feudatories of the Káliphat was the Samáni prince of Bokhárá, whose authority extended over Kabool. At the end of the tenth century Alptágin, the lieutenant of this prince at Ghazni, declared his independence, and being endued with great military talents, was able to establish it. He was succeeded by Subaktágin, his general, a Tártár by birth, who with the sceptre assumed the title of Násiru-deen. Obliged to find employment for his turbulent subjects, he directed their attention to the riches of India; and his son Máhmood, following in his footsteps, was able largely to extend the confines of his empire and to increase his power.

The first efforts of Máhmood were directed against Persia; but India was the richer field, and he was not slow to find that out. He was fired both by ambition and fanaticism in his efforts to subdue the country, aspiring, at the same time, to overthrow both the political power of the Hindus and their idols. Seventeen different incursions were undertaken by him at different times, and temples and idols in large numbers were desecrated and demolished,

besides which, much valuable booty, consisting of gold, silver, and jewellery, was carried off. The great Hindu rájáhs of the day were the sovereigns of Láhore, Delhi, Ajmere, Kanouj, and Gwálior. Several of these united to oppose the advance of the Mahomedans; but Máhmood, whose army was reinforced by Tártár, Arab, and Afghán adventurers, was too strong for them all, and bore down every opposition before him. The final result was the reduction of India into a province of the Ghaznian empire; but its real subjugation was not effected till towards the end of the twelfth century, by Mahomed or Sháhábudeen Ghori, after he had upset the Ghaznian dynasty in Kabool on behalf of his brother, Yeásaludeen. Like Máhmood, he also carried slaughter and desolation before him in India, and did so more easily from the Hindu princes of his time being divided among themselves from internal feuds and jealousy. It is doubtful if the final conquest of India would ever have been effected if the sovereigns of Kanouj and Delhi had cordially united to oppose it; but this they did not, and they were successively defeated and slain. Mahomed then committed the government of the territories acquired by him to his favourite slave, Kuttubudeen Ibek, who established himself at Delhi; and from that time to the capture of Delhi by the British, in 1803, the administration, though conducted by different dynasties and with different degrees of vigour, was uninterruptedly Mahomedan, and preserved in its general outlines an unvaried sameness of tyranny through every stage of civilisation.

The principal feature of Máhmood's government was the plundering of cities and the levying of contributions; and, till we come to the time of Kuttubudeen Ibek, this was all the attention India received from the Mahomedans. From the reign of Ibek may be dated the commencement of a regular administration, though for a long time after history speaks of nothing but an uninterrupted series of wars and an unbroken chain of spoliation, carnage, and misgovernment. Ibek was valiant and generous, but, after gaining the sovereignty, resigned himself to idleness and intemper-

ance. Aram, his son, was unequal to the task of ruling. Altámash, Aram's successor, was active and vigorous, but had ample occupation given to him by the other competitors for the throne, whom he had to put down. Ruknáudeen was weak and dissolute, and unfit to exercise the royal power, which was arrogated by his mother, a cruel and passionate woman, who disgusted everybody and paved the way for the deposition of her son. The talents and virtues of Sultáná Riziá were great; but her sex encouraged the aspirations of ambitious men, and increased the difficulties around her, till she was conquered and put to death. Byrám, her successor, was a man of pleasure, and both imprudent and weak. His successor, Musáood, was equally infirm and vicious, which led to a conspiracy being formed against him, and to his being thrown into prison, while his uncle, Násirudeen Máhmood, was raised to the throne. The new king was a man of vigour and prudence, but was kept constantly engaged by the wars and rebellions which sprung up around him, and was unable materially to improve the internal administration of the country by his wisdom. We read that an ambassador from Haláku, the grandson of Chingez Khán, was received at his court amidst the grandest display of affluence and power; but the wealth and ostentation of the court was not then, or in after times, an index of the comfort and felicity of the people, and there is nothing to show that the people were particularly happy under him. The reign of Gheásudeen Bulbun was one of great vigour, and he made strong efforts to correct the morals of his court, which was graced by many illustrious refugees from Central Asia, whom he treated with much munificence and liberality; but towards his own subjects he was cruel and harsh, and wanton in the punishments he inflicted on them. His successor, Keikobád, was licentious and effeminate, and the whole period of his administration was characterized by the greatest anarchy and confusion, every ambitious man in the kingdom scrambling to arrogate as much power as he could with impunity, till the king fell a sacrifice to the spirit of insubordination which was

evoked. The Emperor Jeláludeen, who succeeded him, was an excellent sovereign; but his capacity for government was not equal to the goodness of his heart, and, though personally kind, generous, and lenient, he did not succeed in bettering the condition of his subjects. The police was neglected, factions and rebellions grew strong from the little check they received, and he died by the hands of his own nephew, whom his partiality had elevated above his children. Of Állá it need only be said that he reigned just in the manner in which he won the throne. If his government was more vigorous than that of his predecessor, it was also much more inhuman, oppressive, and reckless. He was, however, a great warrior, and large conquests were made during his reign—particularly in the Deccan. But they were effected in such hot haste, and were followed by such oppression and cruelty, that the acquisitions were not abiding.

From the time of Álláudeen Khiliji to the advent of Timour there was a perpetual and unvaried contention for the throne, which was repeatedly lost and won by intrigues, perfidies, and violence. We have murders and the putting out of eyes enough to make the mind sick with horror. Omar was imprisoned and his eyes put out, after his elder brothers had been similarly treated. Mobárik and his sons were murdered in one night; and, beside them, many others, in rank inferior only to kings, were relentlessly sacrificed. When Gheásudeen Toglek mounted the throne these tragedies ceased for a time, and he proved himself to be in all respects a great and good king, a warm patron of learning and learned men, and very anxious to diffuse the benefits of education among the poorer classes. But his reign was short, or rather, was made short by the perfidy of his son. The parricide, Mahomed, then ruled for twenty-seven years, and was so barbarous and wantonly inhuman that his tyranny was perhaps the one most pre-eminently disastrous to the people. Feroze Toglek, his successor, was a weak sovereign, but well disposed towards his subjects, for he did all he could to promote their welfare, and

mosques, schools, carávanseráis, wells, aqueducts, and bridges without number were made during his reign. But he had not the energy to prevent misgovernment on the part of his subordinates, who managed everything in their own way, and he was eventually forced to abdicate. The reigns of Gheásudeen II. and Abubaker were unfortunate; that of Násirudeen was altogether devoid of repose, the emperor being kept chiefly employed in subduing and anticipating insurrections; and in the time of the infant Máhmood there were two emperors in Delhi (Máhmood and his rival Nuserit Sháh), who for three years struggled to supplant each other, and threw the affairs of government into the greatest confusion.

In 1397, Timour crossed the Indus, and carried fire and sword through the provinces he passed by. Delhi was taken and pillaged, and the desperate courage of its inhabitants 'cooled in their own blood.' He then caused himself to be proclaimed emperor, and, after having by his cruelties won the unenviable surname of Hillák Khán, or the Destroyer, he went back to Samarkand, leaving India, if possible, in a worse condition than he found it in. Of all great bandits he was perhaps the greatest; his courage was merely another name for the instinct of slaughter; greater praise is due to his intelligence, but India did not profit by it. In India he trampled over everything—laws, rights, and institutions, and annihilated them; and his retirement was succeeded by a general chaos all over the land.

From the time of Chizer to the conquest of Báber the empire was so ill-governed that many provinces started into independence, and the stewards of the state assumed the name and dignity of kings. A thousand petty tyrants ruled independently of each other, each fired with an ungovernable ambition, which Chizer, though himself a man of considerable ability, was not able altogether to conciliate. He pretended to reign over them only in the name of Sháh Rokh, the son of Timour, to whom he sent tribute; and this barely kept the unruly *omráhs* in wholesome fear and a forced obedience, lest there should be a second Mogul

invasion to punish their rebellion. Mobárik, the successor of Chizer, was also endowed with talents, which, however, did not prevent his being defied and assassinated by his vizier; and the reigns of both Mahomed and Állâudeen, who occupied the throne after Mobárik, were equally unquiet, which forced the latter to abdicate and seek in private life that peace and security which were not to be found on the throne. The vacant seat was thereupon usurped by Beloli Lodi, the governor of Sirhind; but the emperors of Delhi at this time possessed little beyond the city itself, and, though Beloli was a man of abilities, all his efforts could not tranquillize the unsettled provinces of the empire and completely restore the sovereignty to its former consequence. He had to fight almost with every neighbour and every feudatory—no one owned subjection till he was compelled to do so; and this kept him so constantly and actively engaged that he found no time to cultivate the arts of peace. Secunder, his son, was also a man of parts, but he too was unequal to the task of improving the distracted condition of the empire, rebellions on the frontiers and cabals and intrigues in the capital keeping him as actively engaged as his father was for nearly the whole term of his reign. Ibráhim Lodi, his successor, was an ill-behaved and unthinking prince, and very outrageous in his conduct, and it was during his administration that the rebellious nobles invited Báber to India. Such was the condition of the country at this time that even a foreign and Tártár prince was hailed by the oppressed as a deliverer. A battle was fought between Ibráhim and Báber, in which the former was slain, and the sovereign power was thus transferred to the house of Timour.

Báber has been much praised for his moderation and forbearance, and, contrasted with his predecessors, he was certainly humane. He was a scholar, and his mind had been chastened by affliction, and from him therefore—if from any one--good government was to have been expected. And yet it does not appear that he really effected anything beyond conquering the country and securing it

to his successor, and it is very doubtful if his rule over the Hindus was either beneficent or just. The reign of his successor, Humáyun, was only remarkable for insurrections and anarchy. Of Shere, the usurper, it is said that, though his administration was short, it was very discriminating and kind, and it is possible that he did endeavour to make some amends to the people for the violence by which he had risen. But it was for a brief period only that he enjoyed his ill-got power. The reign of his successor, Selim, was turbulent. Many of his *omráhs* rose in rebellion against him, and he had also to fight with his elder brother, whose prior right to the throne he had repudiated. His son, Feroze, was a minor when he came to the throne, and became an emperor only to lose his life. Mahomed, the murderer, then arrogated the royal power, but soon perceived that it was not so easy to keep a throne as, under certain circumstances, to acquire it. He found the royal robe too hot for him, and, stripping himself of it, endeavoured to seek safety in flight. Secunder succeeded, but only to be defeated by Humáyun, who, in 1554, reassumed the throne. Akbar succeeded Humáyun almost immediately after. His reign has been called the most brilliant period in Indian history, and perhaps it was so; but sedition, rapine, and murder comprise no small portion of the ingredients of this so-called brilliant era. His whole time was spent in fighting against one chief or another; and, though his military enterprises were generally successful, the troubles of the country were not, on that account, the less. The system of government under him was as despotic as ever; and that he had subordinates of capacity and character in his service was owing more to the penetration and sagacity of his guardian, Byrám, than to any virtue of his own. There is no doubt, however, that he was both wise and liberal, and, what was not less beneficial to the people, also just and tolerant. He was indulgent alike towards the Hindu religion and to Hindu customs, encouraged Bráhmans to return to their own sacred studies, which they had long abandoned, repaired

the observatory at Benáres, and, above all, favoured the policy of marrying Hindu princesses, to secure to the throne the support of the Rájpoots. On the other hand, he has been accused by some of having been cruel and intemperate; and in Tod's *Annals of Rájasthán* we read that his passions sometimes got the better of every consideration of honour and glory. If it be true that he died of a poison which he had designed for a servant whom he was afraid to murder openly, that is a fact sufficient to dishonour his memory.

The reign of Jehángire was one of great anarchy. He could not put down his own *omráhs*, who defied him with impunity and disgraced him; and his sons also did all they could to disturb his repose. To him, however, must be conceded the great credit of being the first Mahomedan sovereign who betrayed a genuine kindly disposition for the Hindus, and this was probably attributable to his being himself half a Hindu by birth, his mother being a princess of Rájpootáná. His successor, Sháh Jehán, had a tranquil reign at the outset, when blessings flowed largely on the people. But he had rebelled against his father, and the example of such a crime is never forgotten. His children trod in his footsteps. At first they took up arms against each other to dispute the succession, but when the most wicked one of the set proved to be the most fortunate, he at once resolved to dethrone his father, and carried out his resolution. The character of Aurungzebe is best explained by his deeds. Hypocrisy and dissimulation were its principal traits, and he was cruel almost to an unnatural extent. It is said that he poisoned his father. If there be doubts on that point, there is none that he murdered his brothers. But his reign was a rather prosperous one, though not altogether free from disturbances. He won great honour with the Mahomedans by persecuting the Hindus; but this, at the same time, completely alienated the Hindus from the imperial cause. His family relations also gave him considerable uneasiness. The example he had set by his conduct towards his father was not lost on

his sons, and Mahomed Manzim, better known as Báhádur Sháh, convinced him that, though he had not the talents to secure success, he had learnt how to rebel; was able to disturb the current of a father's felicity, though not clever enough to interrupt the course of his reign.

Báhádur Sháh, who eventually succeeded Aurungzebe, proved to be a humane king, but was a very weak one; and the peace of the empire was frequently distracted during his reign. Jehander, his successor, was still more imbecile; Feroksere was equally infirm; and so was Mahomed Sháh. During the reigns of these princes cruelties and crimes of the most revolting character were almost daily committed within and about the precincts of the palace; and the public administration was as disorderly as it was weak. The emperors still arrogated an absolute power, but the empire was disunited and defunct, and even nominal allegiance to the imperial name was hardly rendered by the several independent principalities and powers. All this confusion and disquiet were further enhanced by the successive invasions of Nádir Sháh and Áhmed Abdalee, and the excesses committed by their followers; after which period the empire of the Moguls may be considered to have closed with the reign of Álumgire II. Sháh Álum, indeed, was helped to the throne by the Mahrattás, in succession to Álumgire; but he shortly after fell into the power of one Golám Kádir, who put out his eyes, and thenceforth he remained rather as a state-prisoner than a king. In 1803, Delhi was captured by the British power.

We have purposely squeezed down our notice of the several reigns into the smallest compass possible, because from the commencement to the end of Mahomedan supremacy in India we find nothing pre-eminently to distinguish one period from another, all being almost equally disfigured by the exercise of violence and oppression. Of course, among more than sixty sovereigns who reigned over the country for more than seven hundred years, there were some who looked more to the comfort and benefit of

their subjects than others; and we accordingly find that a few princes did govern well, and introduced some wise fiscal regulations, and made certain political concessions of importance to the people. But, as a rule, such concessions were not long continued; they shocked the Mahomedan community by their very liberality, and were, therefore, for the most part withdrawn as soon as the liberal sovereign with whom they originated was defunct. After all, the efforts even of the best were only such as secured but a partial respite to the people from the more revolting enormities and crimes—no more; while between the best and the worst administrators the interval was but a span. Were we to judge of the princes only by their bombastic titles and surnames, India would appear to have been most fortunate in her foreign sovereigns. But the titles, we know, were self-assumed, not awarded by posterity. Had posterity the privilege of nicknaming the emperors, 'the bad,' 'the cruel,' 'the bloody,' and 'the weak,' would have greatly outnumbered 'the defenders of religion' and 'the lights of the world.'

## CHAPTER X.

### PRINCIPAL FEATURES OF THE MAHOMEDAN RULE, AND ITS RESULTS.

PERHAPS the chief distinguishing peculiarity of the Mahomedan rule in India was its fanaticism, which led to the conquest of the country, and to that persecution of Hinduism that settled down finally into an absolute and grinding despotism. The attitude assumed by Máhmood of Ghazni towards Hinduism is well known. He would not suffer the idol of Somnáth to exist for all the bribe the Bráhmans could offer him, and expressed his utter contempt for a race of men who, from generation to generation, had made their living by superstition. When his friend and ally, Anang Pál of Láhore begged him to spare Tánnessur, he answered, saying: 'I have resolved to root out idolatry from India, and exalt the faith of Islám, and why should Tánnessur, a refuge of idols, be spared?' For his bigotry and intolerance he received from Kaliph Kidersilláh the title of 'Protector of the Faith,' a clear proof of what the Moslem world expected from Moslem conquerors in that age. Mahomed Ghori naturally followed in the footsteps of his predecessor, evincing equal warmth and cruelty in the cause of religion. He conducted nine expeditions into India, and destroyed more than one thousand temples, compelling large districts to acknowledge the Prophet's faith; and this ardour was zealously emulated for a long series of years by the princes who followed him. In the reign of Secunder Lodi, a Bráhman having said, in answer to some arguments, that the Hindu

and Mahomedan religions were equally good, as God was the object of adoration to both alike, was offered by the king the alternative of death or conversion to Mahomedanism; and this was the usual procedure, not only with the princes, but also with their underlings all over the country.

Of course, a system of such wholesale persecution and intolerance could not be fully carried out except within the immediate influence of those in power; but the escapes from its operation were only escapes from a positive rule of conduct precisely laid down. All the idols that could be reached were always destroyed, and their owners fleeced in regular course; it was only from irregularity of action or the connivance of subordinates that particular idolaters were not arrived at, nor the images they worshipped desecrated and demolished. The extent to which intolerance was carried will be best understood from the fact that in places where the Mahomedans dwelt in large numbers, the sound of a conch or shell was not permitted to disturb their quietness; and, if concessions to the contrary were ever made, they were made only in deference to the prejudices and feelings of the warlike classes among the Hindus—such as the Rájpoots—whose goodwill it was found advantageous to conciliate. It was from motives of this sort that the government and custody of the sacred places of the Hindus, such as Benáres and Gyáh, were left in native hands; though, even then, they were not in every case subjected exclusively to Hindu interests. We read, for instance, that in Benáres itself, which contained not less than a thousand Hindu temples, the Mahomedans gradually erected so many as three hundred mosques. This, at the first blush, may be taken as a proof of the impartiality evinced by the Mahomedan sovereigns in dealing with the two races they ruled over; but, viewed in connection with the fact already mentioned, that in Mahomedan villages even the sound of a Hindu bell was not tolerated, can only be regarded as a confirmation, and not as a denial, of intolerance. Towards the latter portion of the Mahomedan reign the princes, as a

rule, ceased to be very zealous Mahomedans. Nearly all the descendants of Báber, Aurungzebe excepted, were deists, and took little pains to counterfeit Mahomedanism. Humáyun affected to be a *Sheáh* at the Persian court, though he was always known as a *Sooni* in his own. Jehángire had figures of Christ and the Virgin at the head of his rosary; and two of his nephews embraced Christianity with his full approbation. Even Aurungzebe himself was generally known but as a hypocrite, who affected to be a devout Mussulman only to cover his wickedness, the mask being too flimsy not to be seen through. But their not being stanch Mahomedans did not secure any advantages to the Hindus; for the prejudices against the Hindus were quite as strong with those who were not good Mahomedans as with those who were. Báber, in his *Memoirs*, speaks of the Hindus as 'dogs,' 'damnable heathens,' 'wretches fit only to people the lowest regions of hell;' and none of his descendants ever condescended to think more charitably of them.

Upon this intolerance the Mahomedans founded an absolute despotism, which was very unlike the despotism, if we can so call it, which the Hindu sovereigns had previously exercised. With the Hindu kings there was a settled form of government and a clear code of laws; but there was neither with the Mahomedans, nor any pretence to them, till the times of the more enlightened sovereigns of the Timour family. Besides that, the despotism of a native prince and that of a foreign conqueror are naturally dissimilar; the one is an authority exercised by suffrage, the other presupposes the suffrage to be at an end; under the one the nobility is comprised of natives, under the other of foreigners mainly: and these differences of course made the general divergence very wide, and to be severely felt.

The Mahomedan sovereign had no law to regulate his conduct. His right was that of a conqueror, and he exercised it as it suited his own personal wishes and interests. He was not the delegate of his people, nor the

chief officer of the government, but the life and soul of the whole apparatus, the *primum mobile*, the first impulse of motion, the sole fountain of power. This was the position that was invariably claimed by him, and to the assertion of authority which went with it, his Hindu subjects were undeniably subjected. When the despot was active and anxious to be useful, his power was not hurtful to his subjects, but otherwise. His good influence was felt far and wide, through all the ramifications of society; his strict and apparent impartiality when he was not interested was seen; his vigour in punishing offences without the intervention of rules and precedents was appreciated and felt; and all revered such a sovereign as a god or an angel, except those who, being placed very near to him, came in contact with his private failings and frailties, and knew him to be a man. But when the despot was weak and vicious the case was very different. He spread corruption broadcast all over the whole country, and introduced excesses of all kinds by which every grade of society was polluted. Unworthy to be kings, the rulers of this stamp figure only as tyrants; unworthy to be men, they have been handed down to posterity as brutes: and, as by far the greater number of the sovereigns were so characterized, the evils they gave rise to were incessant. In the reign of Keikobád, when it became generally known that the king was a man of pleasure, luxury and vice became so fashionable that naked courtezans were to be seen in public places, and the magistrates and other magnates of the land appeared drunk in the streets. Nor were such disorders confined to sovereigns of the Keikobád order and their satellites only. Sháh Jehán neglected business when beautiful and rare *houris* were drafted into the *hárem;* Jehángire suffered himself to be alienated from work by the delicious wines of Shiráz and the wit and vivacity of Noor Jehán; and Akbar himself, the great, the illustrious Akbar, neglected his royal duties on the No-roze, to waylay the maidens of Rájwárrá in the dark vaults of the Zenáná, and entice them to hold mock-markets within the precincts of the

palace, that he might have an opportunity to bargain for their virtue.

Of the sovereigns who can be named with anything like admiration, by far the greater number belonged to the house of Timour. There were occasionally some good princes among those who preceded them. Jelâludeen Khiliji was an excellent king, though not an able one; and the whole reign of Gheásudeen Toglek was as commendable as his accession was blameless. But, taking the merits of all together into comparison, and making every allowance for the unmerited adulation which the later sovereigns have received from their personal flatterers, we may still accept the general conclusion that the family of Timour gives us the best and most favourable idea of a Mahomedan despot. It is among them only that we find most of the sovereigns who regulated the administration and decorated the empire, and who, alive to the necessities of the people, erected schools and universities, roads to open out the country, asylums for the poor, and other works of public charity. But, unfortunately, they were also the sovereigns most inordinately fond of wars, which kept the country in a perpetual ferment and completely broke down the character of the people. 'The sword is his,' says the Koràn, 'who can use it, and dominion is for him who conquers;' and in Mahomedan India wars were perpetually carried on, on the most indifferent pretexts, and often without any pretext at all, in vindication of the text. Akbar undertook the conquest of the Deccan to steep in forgetfulness his affliction for the death of Murád; the war of Sháh Jehán with Kuttub, king of Telingáná, had so little motive for it that it was closed on the surrender of a daughter by Kuttub; with many the glory of taking a tower, or of ruining it, was a sufficient reason for an appeal to arms; and by some even such a pretence was considered impertinent. The evils thus engendered were necessarily great; the constant marching and countermarching of armies, whose lawless habits and loose morals no discipline had tamed, very injuriously affected the con-

dition of the people; the poor were robbed in open day of all their little savings, and had no one to appeal to, no redress to hope for.

This was the normal state of the Mahomedan rule. It was frequently further complicated by treachery and sedition, and by disloyalty on the part of persons always at hand to profit at the expense of their country. When the court was a tavern and the palace a brothel, such men had every facility afforded to them to attain their ends, for a weak prince was rarely able to preserve his authority beyond the few districts in the immediate neighbourhood of the capital. If he was absolute, he was absolute only within the precints of his palace, commanding wives to be murdered, or brothers to be blinded, or slaves to be emasculated; but he was almost wholly powerless against the ambitious, who started into independence on every side around him. Even those who reigned with vigour had often very vigorous enemies to deal with, whom it cost them great pains to put down. The triumph of Mohábet over Jehángire, and the stand made by Khán Jehán Lodi against Sháh Jehán, clearly indicate to what extent the *omráhs* often carried, and were able to carry, their opposition against the king. At one time the Persian nobles of the court were so powerful that even Aurungzebe, who, during his rupture with Persia, suspected them of conspiring against him, was compelled to give up the idea of punishing them, lest in the contest he should lose the empire; and the instances were constant of rebellious sons being supported in their treason and rebellion by audacious vassals, strong enough to defy the wrath of the sovereign. Mán Sing supported Chusero against Jehángire; and Sháh Jehán's children, falling out with each other, were assisted, not only in their fratricidal war, but even when the war became one between father and son, by their respective partisans.

Constitutionally there was no check to the royal power, no institution or restrictive enactment to say to the king that this will and this caprice you will not be permitted

to gratify. But the power of the imperial servants was often so great that it had to be respected; and the despot who disregarded it ran the risk of being assassinated even on the throne. There was no class of nobility in India, no mediatory body between the king and the people. But the officers of the government were all picked men, picked from all ranks of the people; and they were all men of great power, either for weal or woe, whom the king never found it safe to ignore. Apart from them, there were also the princes of the blood, all trained in the service of the empire, all fully able to conduct a rebellion with vigour, tact, and cruelty; and these constituted a check on the imperial power which the greatest sovereigns were obliged to recognise. The closest ties of nature did not soften down the character of the surveillance they exercised over the king, they themselves being at the same time similarly watched with lynx-eyed hatred from the throne, of which they of course were fully cognizant. As a rule, every sovereign in mounting the throne endeavoured to step to it over the bodies of all his brethren and relatives; and those who were of a more merciful disposition were only less cruel to this extent, that, instead of strangling or assassinating their relatives, they were content to blind or mutilate them. But it did happen that all their relatives were not reached, and those that escaped unharmed had not only to be respected, but also to be conciliated and supported in power.

It certainly does redound to the credit of the Mahomedan Government, that it always regarded merit as the only passport to elevation; that in the selection of officers for state-service, no prejudice was exhibited of sect or creed. If Gheásudeen Bulbun systematically excluded the Hindus from employment in offices of emolument and trust, the instance was a rare one, perhaps altogether an isolated exception, for we find many Hindus acting prominent parts in every department of the service, under almost all the other sovereigns, both before and after the time of Gheásudeen. Even so early as the days of the bigot

Máhmood, among the lieutenants and governors of the conquered provinces appointed by him there were those who were natives of the soil; and, in later days, such liberal treatment of them was so common that almost all the fiscal offices of the government were invariably held by them, with many others yet more important. Hemu was prime minister to Mahomed Ádili, the usurper; Toṛur Mul, Mán Sing, and Birbal were powerful officers of the government under Akbar; Rájáh Rughoonáth was Aurungzebe's actual vizier, though Meer Jumlá enjoyed the nominal honour; and, similarly, during the reign of the unfortunate Feroksere, though Ábdool was the nominal vizier, the duties of the office were conducted by Ruttun Chánḍ. Of five *omráhs* who shared the glory of a sallying expedition with Akbar in Guzerát, against Hossein, a rebel, four were Hindus; and the ablest and most powerful of the generals and adherents of Sháh Jehán were Bikramjeet and Rájáh Bheem.

But the admission to high offices, which benefited individuals only, was not a sufficient incentive by itself to keep up among the mass of the people their ancient national spirit under a foreign yoke. The number of men who could be rewarded by the gift of offices was necessarily limited. The government required a supply of sturdy men to maintain its vigour, and sought for them in all ranks of life, both among the Hindus and others, and found them. Hence, in perusing the pages of Indian history, we seldom meet with instances of official incapacity, for there was no place reserved for incapacity to occupy. The sovereign was the only inefficient officer in the realm, where he was so; the government refused to have more than one such officer, and that one the highest. If a Jehángirè chose to prefer the wine-cup to the cares and responsibilities of sovereignty, there was a Chájá Áiass always at hand to step in between him and the world. But the prospects of elevation thus held out were only for the select few; and they too had to make certain sacrifices for it, which sometimes took the shape of conversion, and

at other times the surrender of a sister or daughter to the occupant of the throne. There were no prospects of elevation for the mass on these or any other terms; while the select few who did rise in this way seem to have considered themselves more as individuals than citizens, anxious to shine each for his own benefit alone. To this purpose they employed all their official advantages. The government of provinces, the command of armies, their influence over the people, were all made subservient to one object, namely, the attainment of their own private ends. Every bird was bent on feathering his own nest; and the effects of a foreign rule were shown in this manner more glaringly than in any other, that, ordinarily, the Hindus in power no longer cared for the interests of their own race. Who tyrannised most over the people at large? Certainly those in power, even more than the kings they served, and the Hindu officers amongst them not the least.

Of the condition of the people throughout the Mahomedan era history says little. They had no share in the legislation or in the government. Convulsions were of frequent occurrence, and their sole anxiety was to escape being affected by these to any considerable extent. The people took no interest in the wars and rebellions that raged around them, so long as they did not directly suffer from them. They were not slaves; but they had no portion or share in the government, and passed almost for nothing; and they never cared whether the government tottered or stood firm. When the commotions were very severe they deserted their homes, and returned only after the storm had passed by, unhesitatingly transferring their allegiance from one tyrant to another, since the rights of usurpation and murder were not to be denied except at risks which they had no interest to peril. Even in the days of the fiercest civil wars, those for instance which the sons of Sháh Jehán waged with each other, they never betrayed any party-affection or partiality. When it is asked how it happens that the Hindus as a nation betray so much indifference in the midst of the greatest troubles

and commotions, is it not sufficient to say in reply that they had a long era of unrest to acquire lessons in apathy and indifference, longer than was ever enjoyed by any other race?

Even when the sovereigns were just, generous, and kind, the tyranny of the underlings in power made life to the humbler classes excessively burdensome. The riches of the East have become proverbial, but the meaning of the expression is now also well understood. The hoards in the imperial treasury were immense; the courts were splendid; the officers of the government rolled in wealth wrung from those who had not the power to resist them. But there were none but great lords and poor wretches all over the country, as was observed by Bernier; no scope was given for the accumulation of wealth by the industrious labourer, no protection extended to him to enable him to retain what he did acquire. The protection of the people, the security of their property, even their happiness in the domestic circle—everything, in fact, connected with their well-being—depended on the caprices of the men in power. On such uncertain tenure it was impossible for the people to thrive. The despotism of a Jeláludeen Khiliji or an Akbar might inspire confidence for the time; even in the case of an Aurungzebe, his prudence and policy might secure the popular trust. But, as the wisdom and beneficence of such administrations did not survive the rulers themselves, as everything depended on the personal character of the occupant of the throne, even the most paternal government was not successful in evoking in the people a confidence in their position, which alone could have induced them to better it. They lived always in apprehension of the future; were never at rest, and were necessarily never happy or satisfied. This was the especial training the Hindus received from their Mahomedan conquerors. It affected their character deeply; it almost completely remodelled it. Generation after generation submitted quietly to the assumption of an absolute authority on the part of their rulers, totally regardless of

their rights and privileges—unconscious, in fact, of every evil save what affected their lives. The decay of nationality, the decay of Hindu learning, the decay of all energy, in fact, were the necessary results of this servility; and the race that before the advent of the Mahomedans had marched as conquerors from the Indus to the Brahmapootra, and from Hurdwár to Cape Comorin, came thus gradually to dwindle down to what we find them at this day. The cessation of the Mahomedan rule in India can, therefore, never be regretted by a son of the soil.

## CHAPTER XI.

### CASTE, AS IT EXISTS AT PRESENT, AND ITS EFFECTS.

MAHOMEDANISM did much to break up old customs in India; but the nationality of the Hindus was preserved, to a large extent, by the municipal institutions to which we have referred, and also by the restrictions of caste, which, though considerably loosened, were still tenaciously adhered to. Many wholesale conversions were forcibly made; but these were open losses to Hinduism, the people converted ceasing to be counted as Hindus. In some instances only were certain people *discasted*, which led to the formation of a few new castes, mostly of the lowest grade, the first of them being the *Pirális*, who are discasted Bráhmans, with whom no respectable Sudra or Barnasankar will intermix socially on equal terms. But, as a rule, notwithstanding the oppressions of a foreign government, the distinctions of caste were maintained; and what is curious is that they became more and more conservative on account of the very tyranny to which they were subjected. In the primitive days of Hinduism the Bráhmans feasted on cows and buffaloes, indulging also in such intoxicating liquors as the *Sura* and *Soma* drinks; and on all festive occasions their dependents, the men of the lower castes, joined them in their carousals. By the laws of Menu these liberties were withdrawn, and the carousals interdicted; but the Hindus did not begin to enforce those laws very strictly till the time of the Mahomedans, when they felt a sort of pride, which they

had scarcely the hardihood to avow, in assuming the boldest contrast to their conquerors. It was fortunate that the Mahomedans looked upon them with sovereign contempt—with much greater contempt, in fact, than the English look upon both in the present day; and this sheltered caste considerably from persecution.

The present phase of caste therefore attained its greatest vigour, absurd as the statement may read, during the sovereignty of the Mahomedans. The intrinsic superiority of one body over another, with which the distinctions originally started, did not exist at this time. The Bráhmans were no longer the pious readers of the *Veds*, or the chanters of the sacred hymns; the Kshetriyas no longer headed expeditions against their enemies, nor brought the *dasya* races under control. They were both slaves now, in common with their other Hindu brethren, the Sudras and the Barnasankars, to a race whom all in common regarded with equal fear and abhorrence; and it was under these peculiar circumstances that the injunctions of the Shástras came to be strengthened by stringent by-laws, and to be oppressively enforced. The Bráhman, sprung from the mouth of the Deity, still claimed to be the lord of the whole creation, though he quaked before the power of the *Mlech'ha*, from whose wrath even his gods could not protect either him or themselves. In the olden days his position was qualified by his virtues; among the Bráhmans the learned were held to be the most excellent, among the learned the resolute, among the resolute those who were active, and among the active those who possessed divine knowledge as distinguished from knowledge of other kinds. It was on these legal texts that the distinctions of Kulins, Srotriyas, and Bangshajes were founded. The nine qualities of the Kulin, the Hidalgo of his race, were especially stated to be learning, piety, asceticism, ability to read the Veds, liberality, good conduct, good name, respect, and fondness for pilgrimages. The Srotriyas were those who possessed eight out of these nine qualities; the rest were the Bangshajes. But under the Mahomedan

rule all these quality demarcations were swept away, though the names were retained, and the Bráhman was a Bráhman, and the Kulin a Kulin, whether they possessed any or none of the virtues which previously formed the *sine quâ non* of their character. All the original divisions of caste were natural and necessary for the preservation of social order at the outset. The separation of religion, government, commerce, and mechanical labour was the most obvious step for a people to take in their first start in political life; and the next step after it was to create further subdivisions in each grade, to separate the good and the virtuous from the rest of their class. But the precautions taken to secure this end could not endure under foreign domination; the contention between merit and demerit could not be continued when an impure race claimed supremacy over all parties; and this led to all such distinctions becoming hereditary, which is the most important feature of caste now in all grades.

The general principles of the system, however, remained unchanged, at the same time that they were further strengthened under a foreign rule in the manner stated. In that system the Bráhmans arrogated the first place, and this has been retained. The Kshetriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras were displaced by the Barnasankars; but these, subdivided within themselves, established a scale of precedence which is still strictly adhered to. In Bengal, where the trammels of caste are at this moment infinitely stronger and more oppressive than in any other part of India, there is an intermediate class called the Káyasth, of which the saying is proverbial that every member of it is invariably a man of education. After that class rank the Vaidyas, and then the rest of the Barnasankars. The lower classes, however, are in point of fact, mere ciphers in society, and necessarily do not attach as much importance to caste restrictions as the rest, though they are of course always anxious to follow the lead of the higher classes in the matter, so long as their own interests are not adversely affected thereby. Many of the trades and

mechanical arts have thus come to be cultivated promiscuously. This is an innovation which the lower classes have introduced of themselves, and as it affects them only, it has never been interfered with. It also is a new feature of caste not contemplated by the laws of Menu, and has resulted mainly from changes introduced by the Mahomedans.

The principal rules of caste, observed by the higher classes at this moment, are: (1) that individuals cannot be married who do not belong to the same caste; (2) that a man may not sit down to eat with another who is not of his own caste; (3) that his meals must not be cooked except either by persons of his own caste, or by a Bráhman; (4) that no man of an inferior caste is to touch his cooked rations, or even to enter his cook-room; (5) that no water or other liquor contaminated by the touch of a man of inferior caste can be made use of—rivers, tanks, and other large sheets of water being, however, held to be incapable of defilement; (6) that articles of dry food, such as rice, wheat, grains, etc., do not become impure by passing through the hands of a man of inferior caste so long as they remain dry, but cannot be taken if they get wetted or greased; (7) that certain prohibited articles, such as cow's flesh, pork, fowl, etc., are not to be taken; and (8) that the ocean is not to be crossed, nor any of the boundaries of India passed over. The wars of the Bráhmans with the Áhoors had been so violent, and the separation between the races was so marked ever after, that crossing the Indus was held to be particularly heinous; but that this did not absolutely entail the loss of caste, is to be inferred from the historical fact that Hindu military parties constantly passed to and from Afghánistán, both in the time of the Mahomedans and in the era that preceded it.

The rules above enumerated are generally very strictly enforced up to this moment, and show clearly that *caste* and *rank* are not institutions of the same kind, as some people affect to believe. Rank is accessible to all, but caste is not; worth and greatness of mind have raised the weaver and the ploughman in England to the station of

peers; but between the Bráhmans and the Barnasankars the gulf, now at least, is impassable. It may be conceded that complete and absolute equality of classes nowhere exists; it is the ideal for which the world has long panted, but which it has never been able to attain. But while the lines of separation between the grades of rank are subtle and fleeting, and easily crossed, those between the gradations of caste can never be stepped over, even by the most meritorious aspirant. The wants of society in India have multiplied, and the number of castes has increased; the trades and mechanical arts are now followed at random by almost all the lower orders: but still do the oilman and the washerman, though they are equally impure in the eye of the law, avoid each other as punctiliously as the Bráhman avoids both of them from fear of contamination.

Nay, as times go, the lower orders are obliged to be more particular in their behaviour than the higher orders, who can afford to act with greater independence. The latter are bound down to preserve their orthodoxy only by the restrictions and terrors of the law, the pride of their positions being considered a sufficient pledge for their good faith. But the case is different, very different, with the lower orders, as they have each a class of men called *parámániks* to exercise inquisitorial powers over them, prying even into the minutest privacies of life, and interfering with almost every domestic incident, on the pretext of keeping matters straight. A son or a daughter cannot be given away in marriage, friends cannot be entertained, ceremonies cannot be performed, without the permission and co-operation of these social harpies, such co-operation having, of course, a price attached to it; and if a wife or daughter is suspected of frailty, or a son or brother accused of irreligion, the unfortunate family is always shorn to the quick, with not even the privilege of complaining left to them when their caste is spared. Originally, the loss of caste was incurred mainly by crimes, and by the omission of expiations for offences; and the punishment inflicted was exclusion from its circle.

The rules are now more capricious: caste is often jeopardized by the pettiest mistakes or frivolities; and the punishments are necessarily less stringent, particularly in the larger towns and villages, which brings the *parámánik* a considerable profit. Usually, all caste questions are decided by a *punchâyet* without appeal. In small matters a dinner to the castemen, with a present to the *parámánik*, settles everything satisfactorily; but in more serious defections the intervention of the Bráhman becomes indispensable, together with the administration of the *práschitra* (penance), which is accompanied by the eating of the five products of the cow, namely, milk, butter, curds, dung, and urine, all of which are mixed together.

Of the higher castes, the Bráhmans live generally on grains, vegetables, and milk, while the other castes eat fish also—animal food (except of the prohibited kinds) not being abstained from by those who can afford to pay for it. One class, the Vysnubs, who in theory repudiate caste but yet adhere to it in practice, avoid animal food in common with the Bráhmans; but these are only sectarian differences, not based on caste restrictions. Of many castes the domestic habits and arrangements are very nearly the same, and this may have contributed in the past to the mingling and confusion of classes to some extent. But the different orders are more careful at present, and, notwithstanding all the outward resemblance between them, no two castes will freely and fully associate with each other. It is this which is acting most prejudicially to the interests of the nation, multiplying the divisions more and more, and keeping all of them in the background at a time when other communities, even in the East, are forcibly thrusting themselves to the front. It ensures political faithfulness to a foreign ruling power well enough, and was on that account encouraged and fostered by the Mahomedans; but it has over all social and national purposes a most baneful effect. A hearty national union of a people so constituted can never be hoped for; no necessity or general misfortune will yoke the Bráhman

and the Barnasankar side by side in one common cause. If they were found banded together for a time during the mutiny of 1857, it is certain that that confederation would never have outlived the passing hour.

The caste of the primitive ages was perhaps a good institution for a primitive people. It was not impolitic in a social system in its infancy to secure the integrity of its parts by assigning separate and distinct offices and employments to each, with such a safety-valve as the law prescribed by allowing the different orders, in seasons of distress, to assume the duties of the classes below them. The mistake was in enforcing the permanence of the divisions through all ages, by strict regulations which compelled the son to tread in the footsteps of his father, barred merit from promotion, and denounced intermarriages lest they should lead to undistinguishable confusion. To a certain extent promiscuous unions, though so carefully guarded against, did take place, which gave birth to the mixed tribes. But this was before the age of Menu, when, we may infer, the restrictions against intermixture were not very rigid. Since then the separation of races has been more strictly enforced, and, though the separate duties assigned to the several classes are not very exclusively adhered to, there is less intermixture of races now than there was in the past.

The effects of caste on the Hindus as a nation were not very unfortunate in the earlier ages. It gave to the arts a certain amount of perfection which was long retained; and which, we may say, is in certain cases retained even to the present day. The articles sent from India to the great European exhibitions justly called forth the admiration of the best judges. The *mul mul khás* of Dáccá, the lace of Nagercoil, the gold embroideries of Benáres, and the mosaics of Ágrá, have been universally prized at all times. The *Shánkáris* of Dáccá make splendid shell bracelets, and the *Kánsáris* of Bikrampore beautiful utensils of brass and copper; and we have the authority of Bishop Heber to assert that, in the mechanical arts generally, the

Hindus are not inferior to the ordinary race of European artisans. But still the fact remains, that no improvements of any utility were made in the country under a system by which the acquirements of one generation are transmitted to another only from father to son; and, perhaps, no improvements would ever have been realized in it but for the advent of the English and the scientific ideas they have introduced. The perfection to which the natives brought certain arts without such assistance is undeniable; but the instruments they used to secure the result were so rude and primitive in character that the inference is inevitable that the artist owed his success, not to the exclusiveness of his caste, but to his patient industry, which without the restrictions of caste might have placed him yet higher in position. With the assistance of a few sticks or pieces of wood he has always weaved the finest linens procurable in the world. No machinery will perhaps enable him to improve the texture of such fabrics, for the simple reason that the fineness of the linen he weaves is the result mainly of hand-spinning, which gives the thread greater tension from the moisture it imbibes from the hand than it can possibly secure from machinery of any kind. But there is no doubt that better machinery will enable him to quadruple the produce of his labour within the time devoted to it, and, in several branches of trade, enable him to improve his old models and patterns to which he is at present so steadfastly wedded. So also in the cultivation of the soil, the spirit of patient industry evinced by the cultivator is perhaps as great as is to be met with anywhere else: in a country where there never have been any irrigation-works to speak of, all the fields are cultivated, though that frequently entails the carriage of water from long distances, in the rudest fashion. But the out-turn of such labour is comparatively poor, and only because the agricultural implements, handed down from father to son, are of the rudest kind. The Hindu cultivator is not, as is frequently asserted, deficient in common observation and good sense. The fittest crop for the soil,

and the fittest season for sowing it, are both well understood by him, and the advantage of a rotation of crops is also appreciated. But look at the plough Triptolemus uses—the plough handed down to him as an heirloom by his ancestors without having been improved to any extent since the era of the Ahoor wars, and you understand at once why his has not been a thriving profession.

There is no doubt that the concentration of all a man's energies to one object imparts a high degree of perfection in the attainment of that object, which accounts fully for the superiority of the Hindus in particular articles of manufacture. But it is also true that confinement within a circumscribed sphere necessarily cramps the spirit of discovery and invention, deadens the vigour of emulation, and, by keeping back outsiders, effectually closes the door of improvement; and of this the proofs in India are to be read on all sides. One caste, the *Vaidyas*, has followed the profession of medicine from age to age, and yet the whole country will hardly yield a dozen regular physicians whose practice is really founded on science, the rest being mere quacks, illiterate as the community in general, and sporting with the lives and health of their fellow-men only by virtue of their birth. Why is this so? The science of the *Kobiráj* is not imposture throughout; it is a science of great antiquity, and contains many truths. But it was confined to a class; there was no outdoor competition: and so it has now ceased to be learnt. The only superiority the *Kobiráj* of the day has over the European doctor rests in this, that he has the knowledge of certain very efficacious indigenous medicines of which other practitioners are ignorant; but his method of treatment is generally exceedingly rude and defective. Another caste, the *Kánsáris*, follow the profession of founding brass and making brazen utensils, and yet, notwithstanding the manufacturing skill and taste of the artisans of Bikrampore, to which we have borne willing testimony, the character of the utensils usually seen in the country is very poor, and their number

few, and the methods of fluxing and compounding metals are far from being perfect. The *Kumbhakárs*, or potters, are a separate class, and yet the pots commonly in use are of the most miserable description, and there is nothing resembling porcelain or queen's-ware in the country. The *Karmakárs*, or blacksmiths, turn out no work that is either gracefully executed or well finished, except what is completed under European superintendence. The joiners are very indifferent workmen, and have only recently learnt the use of the rule, compass, and gimlet from their foreign employers. The *Rajakas*, or washermen, did not know the use of soap till very modern times, nor ironing, clear-starching, and calendering. The common *Sarnakárs*, or goldsmiths, are very poor artists, those only excepted who have profited by the instruction, or who have served under the superintendence, of European masters. Even now paper-making is not well understood; and there were no tailors in India to speak of previous to the Mahomedan conquest. In truth, the conveniences of life seem never to have thrived under the caste system as well as was anticipated. All the exports of India to this day consist of raw materials, which her children have not learnt to work up; while her imports clearly show that, for the elegancies of life since introduced, the supply of articles comes wholly from the western world.

But these drawbacks are of little consequence as compared with the intellectual turpitude that caste has given birth to. The ancient Bráhmans took an honest pride almost from their setting out as a nation in their literary pursuits, and excelled in them all their competitors of the old world. Caste certainly did for ages enable them to maintain the most learned commonwealth in Asia, if not in the globe—a commonwealth that stood as a model to foreign admirers, and from which Plato and Pythagoras were not ashamed to imbibe inspiration. But here again, the restrictions it imposed began to operate unfavourably as soon as the learning of the Bráhmans under a foreign government began to decline. The habits of the class

were soon altered under the bigot sway of the followers of the Prophet; the study of the sacred books, which had made them what they were, was given up, being only partially resumed in the days of Akbar; and, as no other aspirants were at liberty to approach those books, they soon came to be utterly neglected. The designing few knew well wherein lay their security; they did not seek knowledge themselves, nor did they allow others to do so. The laws gave them a hold on the community which they persistently retained; the *Veds* and their *Angas* were kept sealed from the mass: and deceiver and deceived thus gradually went down together to the depth they now occupy.

The sum-total of the effects of caste is, that civilisation has been brought to a standstill in the country by its mischievous restrictions; and there is no hope of this being remedied till those restrictions are removed. That they will soon be broken through is the cry raised from all sides; but we have no faith in it, although Young Bengal, we know, is prosecuting the work with much earnestness. The rest of the community still adhere to caste with the greatest pertinacity. Many of them have doubtless become lax in their adherence to its rules, violations of which are daily perpetrated with impunity. But still they do stick to them, and one of the pleas set up in justification of the Mutiny, was the fear felt by the sepoys that their caste was being tampered with. Abolish suttee, infanticide, and slavery; establish the Christian religion by conversion, if you can; but do not think of interfering with our domestic habits—says the orthodox Hindu—or with our caste arrangements and prejudices. This he who runs may hear is the general protest all over the country. A change is of course desirable; but to be effective it must come from the people themselves, and will probably take a long time yet to come. At present, excepting Young Bengal, those only kick against caste whom it has virtually repudiated. This, we say, is the case throughout the peninsula, barring its metropolitan towns, where the

advance of liberalism has been greater, and where the caste system has necessarily outgrown itself. Unfortunately, however, this, as a rule, has not been the work of the schoolmaster. A love of food and drink proscribed by the Shástras and a morbid craving for promiscuous intercourse with females of all orders have been the chief accelerators of improvement! For amelioration thus inaugurated further progression will not be very easy to achieve.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE PRESENT PHASE OF RELIGION.

THE religious changes effected in India since its conquest by the Mahomedans have been very great. Apart from the conversions effected by Mahomedanism, which turned a large portion of the community from being Hindus into Mahomedans, the rest of the people were also gradually withdrawn by it from the study of the *Veds* and the *Purâns*, and this modified the institutions of the country to a considerable extent from the condition in which they were left by the latest revivals of Buddhism and Vedantism. The *Veds*, *Purâns*, and *Itihâses* were still regarded as the oracles of Hinduism, and the main divisions of belief yet leaned on them for support, as before; but the shape and character of the religion were changed, even Pourânism itself being distorted, by the addition of astounding extravagances and absurdities, which were mainly coined by the ascetics. The three great ramifications of the religion as it is in force at this moment are indeed the Pourânic divisions of Saivaism, Vysnubism, and Sâctaism, or the worship of Siva, Vishnu, and the Sactis. But, besides those deities, the worship of many other objects has been introduced which were unknown to the *Purâns*, and which would perhaps never have been religiously regarded if the reverence of the people for the *Veds* and the *Purâns* had not been undermined. The additions to which we refer comprise what is called the worship of stocks, stones, and creeping

things, which is now the principal feature of Hinduism, and which has introduced new rituals whereby the entire religious system has been made more intricate than even the *Puráns* ever contemplated. And Mahomedanism was content to leave the religion of a subject race in this state, as the next best thing to conversion, so long as it was handsomely compounded for.

The chief gods of the present day are Siva, Vishnu, and the Sactis; but the first is only represented by the *Lingam*, worship in no other form being now offered to him; the second, by his *avatárs*, Ráma and Krishna, he himself being held to be of little account; while the third receive adoration in the persons of Káli and Doorgá. Saivaism requires no further notice in this place, as we have referred before to the worship of the *Yoni* and *Lingam*, and at the present hour the Saiva sect is gradually mixing up with that of the Sáctas, which virtually gives to the worship of the *Argha* one sect, one emblem, and one worship. The Vysnubs were an unimportant order till the era of Chaitanya, who gave their doctrines a new character and an extensive currency. The histories of the *avatárs*—Ráma and Krishna—are well known and need not be recapitulated. The character of the former was respectable; but as much can hardly be said of the latter: and yet both of them are still largely venerated, the second even more so than the first. The stories regarding Krishna are mostly scandalous. On one occasion he is said to have stolen the clothes of the *gopángonás* (milk-maids) while they were bathing in the Jumná, and to have then amused himself by jesting on their nudity. It is explained by the Vysnubs that when this trick was played, his godship was but a boy; which, we suppose, accounts for the great prevalence of infanticide in the country so long. In the sixteenth century Chaitanya drew prominent attention to the worship of this god, from Nuddeá, the seat of Sanskrit learning in Bengal, and, assuming the life of an ascetic, preached the glad tidings all over India, proceeding in one direction to the Deccan,

and in another to Mathoorá. His watchwords were 'Krishna, Krishna,' and 'Hari, Hari, bole;' and the burden of his teachings was that Krishna was the soul of the universe, who was to be worshipped solely by *faith*. This was a new idea for Hinduism; the *knowledge* of God, which the philosophers of India had always so zealously taught and pretended to, was now expressly discarded; all that was necessary was to *believe* that Krishna was the Deity, and this was pronounced to be more efficacious than works. With this glorification of faith Chaitanya also repudiated caste, and not only invited all classes of Hindus to accept his religion, but even converted some Mahomedans to it. The *Harináma*, he maintained, was given alike to Jew and Gentile, the Bráhman and the Chandál; in religion there was no distinction to separate one man from another: and all his followers were directed to look upon each other as brethren.

This changed the character of Vysnubism completely, and greatly raised it in importance; vast multitudes joined Chaitanya and revered him as a god—as Krishna himself in a second birth; and the success of his religion at the outset was almost as great as that of Buddhism under Sákya. One great concession it made to humanity was that it did not demand the renunciation of home and family ties. Remain what and where you are, follow your usual occupations in life, perform all your appointed duties, but, over and above all that, believe in Krishna and sin not: and this was all that it required. A hereditary priesthood was established by Chaitanya in the family of Nityánanda, his friend and disciple, whose descendants are distinguished by the name of *Gossáins*, the most respectable of the vagrant classes of the present day. They are not entirely separated from secular affairs, and very seldom inhabit wilds and forests, having houses and temples of their own, and being as a rule well-to-do in life. The immediate adherents of Chaitanya followed him implicitly in all things; caste was repudiated by them; the Bráhman and the Mahomedan sat down and ate together

as brothers: nor was any scruple felt by them in burying the dead. But these innovations did not continue long. The Vysnubs all over the country are at this moment very numerous: but, for the most part, they adhere steadfastly to the distinctions of caste, and those only do not do so who were originally drafted from the lowest grades of society. One great and beautiful doctrine of the sect is that of *Ahingsá*, *i.e.*, that no sentient being is to be hurt. Animal food and the sacrifice of animal life for any purpose whatever is thus strictly prohibited. Chaitanya devoted his life to the study of the *Sri Bhágabat* alone, and that is also the favourite *Purán* with the Vysnubs.

The Sáctas are the worshippers of Sacti, Máyá, or Prácriti, the female principle or energy of the godhead. This principle is subdivided into (1) Doorgá or Káli, the Sacti of Siva; (2) Lakshmi, the Sacti of Vishnu; (3) Seraswati, the Sacti of Bruhmá. These are worshipped generally in some eight or ten forms, this being the broad sense in which Sacti worship is understood. Actually, however, the worship of the Sácta is almost entirely confined to the worship of the Sacti of Siva; and the Sáctas thus defined are divided into the two leading branches of *Dakshináchárís* and the *Bámácháris*, or the right-hand and left-hand worshippers. The ritual of the first has nothing unusual or impure in its character; while that of the second is covert and grossly obscene. With both branches drinking spirituous liquors is an essential qualification of religious service; but, while the first indulge in it moderately, the second do so in excess. The numerical strength of the Sáctas is very great. In Bengal they outnumber the Saivas and Vysnubs taken together; but Western India has a large number of Vysnubs, and Southern India, or Mysore and the Mahrattá country, a large number of Saivas. The Saivas and Sáctas are, however, only separated at present by an imaginary line, which is growing fainter and fainter every day.

Besides the above sects there are two minor denominations, of *Sauras*, or worshippers of Surjya, and *Ganapatyas*,

or worshippers of Ganesa. These five classes together are called the *Panchaupásaks*, or the five classes of worshippers into which the orthodox community of India is divided. The belief in One God is also professed, but by men belonging to one or other of these five classes, the apparent inconsistency of the act not being embarrassing, since it has the support both of the *Veds* and the *Puráns*. The *Puráns* always uphold the worship of particular deities, and in the same breath vindicate the worship of the One God who cannot be approached by the intervention of either forms, temples, or altars. Says the *Sri Bhágabat*, for instance: 'The fool who from ignorance forsakes the one only God, and adores an image of clay, stone, metal, or wood, acts like one who pours melted butter on ashes instead of pouring it on fire.'* Similarly, the *Mahánirván* says: 'Figure fancied in thought can no more secure salvation to the soul than dreams of sovereignty can secure the possession of an empire.' But for all such texts the idea of the One God, unrepresented by form or description, never gets beyond the vagaries and dreams of the philosophers, since He can be approached only by the intellect. The philosophers in every sect, or those who pretend to be such, affect thus to worship the Deity alone; while the rest of the order worship the *Murti* by which He is represented to the mass, which is regarded 'as a ladder by which to rise by degrees to the light of lights.' Unfortunately, the ladder is a descending and not an ascending scale. Dissipation and excess do not restore people to vigour and health, nor idolatry and its accompaniments to God and true religion; and the descent in India has been so rapid that among the present objects of worship are counted stocks and stones, as the *shálgarám* and the *dhenki;* implements of trade, as the hatchet, the chisel, the hammer, the bellows, the shuttle, the razor, the plough, and the awl; animals, as the cow, the monkey, the jackal, and the dog; birds, as the peacock, the goose, and the owl; trees, as the *toolsee*, the *butt*, the *bokool*, the

* Pouring *ghee* on fire is a religious oblation.

*neem*, and the *ashwata;* and rivers, as the Ganges, the Jumná, the Seraswati, the Brahmapootra, the Krishná, and the Cáuvery.

This, then, is the present phase of Hinduism. The *Veds*, though not expressly ignored, are not seriously thought of, except by philosophers and divines; the *Puráns*, which stand as the scriptures of the religion in force, have been still further amplified by the monks and recluses, who have secured an ascendency they never possessed before; there are not only 'gods many,' but almost everything is God. All the objects worshipped are called the intelligible symbols of the Deity, and it is pretended by the learned that every belief and practice thus upheld contains a deep and hidden meaning, often a philosophical or historical enigma, and that there is no part of the system which does not admit of being explained into sense. This may be so; in India every use has been made of religion but its proper one, and, as no traces of history exist, it may be admitted that many historical truths lie secreted in the religious legends which have survived. But these hidden gems cannot now be easily disinterred; and it is certain that the multitude do not care to interpret mythology except in its ostensible sense. The religion as it stands was not meant for the learned, and is despised by them as a thing unworthy of their intelligence. It was meant only for the unlearned, who do not go beyond the surface to understand it.

Of course the religion is zealously adhered to. A superficial belief is not necessarily an indifferent belief. The Hindus in all ages have been essentially a religious people, and are so to this day, notwithstanding that, in the course of time and under the domination of foreigners, their attachment to their religion has been considerably shaken. It is said that at the present moment the women only are the really fervent worshippers, while the men merely affect. But this is not nearly, and certainly not wholly, true. The devotion of the heart for such a religion as that we have described could only truly belong to the

mind that is weak; but the men tell their beads and worship their *griha-devatás* daily all the same; and it cannot be said with any truth that they do not believe in them. In the age of the *Puráns* it was questioned if the gods were deserving of the homage of the *rishis*. We read in the *Padma Purán* that Bhrigu was deputed by the sages to find out who was best entitled to their respect. He went accordingly, first to the heaven of Siva, but could not get access to him, as he was engaged with his wife, his constant occupation when alone. This disgusted the envoy, who retreated muttering: 'This is not him I seek.' He next repaired to the heaven of Bruhmá, whom he found surrounded by his admirers, and inflated with pride. 'Nor is this he,' said the philosopher, and retired. He went last to the court of Vishnu, whom he found asleep, which so chagrined him that he gave him a kick. The unbelief or doubt of the present day, if either exist, does not ever assume such a tangible form. 'This is not him I seek,' no Hindu dares mutter to himself now, though in place of a Maháْdeva he has only his *Lingam* to adore, in place of a Vishnu his *avatárs*, and in place of other objects of veneration mere animals and birds which are made to represent them.

The set festivals observed in honour of the different deities are distributed throughout the year, and it is a common saying that in the twelve months there are not less than thirteen festivals,* or more than one in a month. The first month of the year, named Bysák, which corresponds with half of April and half of May, is pre-eminently the month for good works, and for the particular worship of the *griha-devatás*. In it the *Kásundi*, a favourite Indian pickle, is also made and worshipped. In May and June come on the worship of *Shashti*, the guardian goddess of children, and the *Dasahárá*, or celebration of the descent of the Ganges. In June and July there are the *Snán Játra*, or bathing festival of Jagganáth, and later, his car festival, the well known *Rath Játra*.

* They are certainly more in number.

The next month, July–August, celebrates the *Joolna Játra*, or rocking festival of Krishna, and also the worship of *Manshá*, the goddess of serpents. In August–September there is the *Janma Astami*, or the nativity of Krishna; in September–October are held the *Doorgá* and *Lakshmi Poojáhs*, the second a less remarkable festival than the first; and in October–November and November–December come on the worship of the minor divinities, named Shámá, Jaggadhátri, Kártika, etc., and also the *Rása Játra* of Krishna, which commemorates his love-sports in Brindábun. In January–February follows the *Seraswáti Poojáh*, or the worship of the goddess of learning; in February–March, the *Siborátri*, a sacred fast held in honour of Siva, and also the *Holi*, or red-powder festival, which celebrates the spring; and in March–April the swinging festival of Siva, which closes the year. Beside these set solemnities, a daily worship is offered to Káli in her temples by the Sáctas, to the *Lingam* by the Saivas, and to Krishna and his mistress, Rádhá, by the Vysnubs. There are also many festivals of minor note held in honour of Lakshmi, as goddess of plenty and good-fortune, almost all of which are agricultural observances. Some of the other festivals to which we have referred, such as the *Doorgutsob*, the *Rath Játra*, and the *Rása Játra*, are similarly supposed to have had at the outset an astronomical origin, though at present they are understood to be purely mythical only. In many parts of the country *Bhoots*, or ghosts, too, are worshipped, mostly as family *devatás*, to whom propitiatory offerings are made, not only to secure their own forbearance, but, in addition to it, their assistance in repelling the malevolence of other spirits.

In connection with some of the festivals alluded to much licentiousness was at one time practised, especially by the ascetic orders, who celebrated their orgies in dark caves and retired places rendered obscurer by the shade of umbrageous trees, where shame and decency were lost sight of in the gloom. Female worshippers were here easily per-

suaded to yield up their persons to the *sabaits*, or priests, after being deluded into the belief that by doing so they did honour to the gods: and, as the darkness of the temples precluded the possibility of future recognition, the victims were never hard to find. In almost every range of hills in India are caverns and temples to be seen hewn out of the solid rock, the access to which is as difficult as the enormities committed within them have been astounding. But the domination of foreigners served greatly to check these debaucheries in time, and they have now almost everywhere ceased.

This, which is its worst phase, is not, however, the only phase that Hinduism presents. Though the faith is misdirected, there are numerous instances of virtue and piety, a pure mind, and a holy life all over the country. Most of the worshippers of the *Lingam* and the *Yoni* do not understand the nature of the objects they worship, and their devotion is as pure and chaste as the worship of an English *materfamilias* in a Christian church. Krishna had sixteen thousand concubines, 'by drinking the ambrosia of whose lips,' says Govinda, 'and embracing their heaving bosoms, Murári was filled with joy.' But superfluous libertinism is not understood by the human mind; the immoral tendency of the story is lost in its very extravagance, and the worshipper settles down naturally into piety, faith, and hope, which always are his special articles of belief. No doubt some temples have still their *deva-nutees* and *deva-dáshees*, the concubines or women of the *devatás*; but these are inducements designed especially for entrapping the immoral classes of pilgrims, who are invited to the shrines only for the money they pay down, and them the better class of pilgrims never notice, nor allow themselves to be indiscriminately huddled up with. It is not the less a shame that open shops of infamy are thus maintained on the very threshold of the temples, and that such a large portion of the men and women assembled before them repair thither, not really to worship God, but to celebrate irregularities religiously countenanced.

The principal dogmas of religion are the same, or nearly the same, among all the sects. The idea of transmigration is one of these, and is equally believed in by the Saiva, the Vysnub, and the Sácta, just as it was, in times past, by the Buddhist and the Vedantist. It finds favour from the fact that it extends the time of man's probationary trial on earth, and holds out the hope that that, to attain which in a single life is so difficult, may yet be secured by slow degrees and a persistence in self-purification through different lives. No case is hopeless; eventual emancipation is not unattainable by any. The beliefs in a material heaven and in purgatory are the necessary accompaniments of the belief in transmigrations. There must be a regulated ascent in happiness for the devotee who purifies himself gradually for the highest reward, and also a regulated degradation for sins for him who procrastinates but does not despair of attaining final salvation. In either case the devotee believes that he is born under the influence of acts performed in a prior state of existence, though he retains no knowledge of that prior state, nor any sense of his identity with the being who existed in it. Whether the belief be right or wrong admits, of course, of much discussion. It apparently answers one purpose exceedingly well: it reconciles the Hindu easily to the crook in his lot.

The descriptions both of heaven and hell, as given by the Shástras, are exceedingly poetical. The heavens to reward the virtuous are of different degrees of excellence, according to the virtues which have to be rewarded. They are all situated on Sumeru, the general residence of the gods, which rises from the earth in the form of an inverted cone, broader at the top than at the bottom. According to some *Puráns* the whole of the mountain is of solid gold, and yet of many colours, the east being white, the west brown, the north red, and the south yellow. But other *Puráns* mention that the east only is of gold, the west of silver, the north of copper, and the south of iron. One only river, dividing itself into four branches, waters this paradise, and is called Mandácini, on the earth named Gungá. The dif-

ferent heavens are situated on different peaks of Sumeru, the purest being Ilávatta, the heaven of Bruhmá, which is described as excelling all others in splendour and magnificence. The next to it is Bycant, the heaven of Vishnu, which is fully equalled by Kailása, the heaven of Siva. There are twenty-one other heavens belonging to the minor deities; but these are of less height and excellence than the courts of the triad. The pleasures of these heavens are wholly sensual, consisting of excellent food, the dance and song of heavenly courtesans, the fragrance of heavenly flowers, and other enjoyments which it is not permitted to the eye, ear, and heart of man to anticipate. The soul is rewarded with these gratifications fully till all its merit is repaid, after which it is compelled to take birth again, 'with resulting influence of its former deeds,' that is, obtaining a higher place in life than it had enjoyed before; and thus it goes on through a continual round of births till it attains one end or the other—final bliss or woe.

For the wicked are regions of retribution and torments, and transmigration through degraded births, whereby they are expected to expiate their sins; and it must be admitted that the punishments thus denounced are sufficiently harrowing. There is a hell of darkness, a hell of burning oil, and a hell of burning copper; a hell full of reptiles, and a hell of thorns; a hell for the adulterer, where the object of his affections is presented to him in red-hot iron, which he is forced to embrace; the hell where sinners are beaten with clubs, that in which they are torn by dogs, that where cannibals feast on them, that where ravenous birds tear them to pieces, and many more. But the soul, guilt-dyed, remains not in these for ever, any more than the soul of the good man remains for ever in heaven. The pains of hell cease to afflict on the expiration of an allotted time, after which the sinner is permitted to return to the earth and react his part.

The lowest peasant in India firmly believes in a state of rewards and punishments, and strives to merit the one and avoid the other. But this innate religious feeling, which

the idea of the Pouránic hell was so well calculated to strengthen, is effectually weakened by the general laxities of the faith now current, which indicate easier methods of reconciliation with the heavenly powers. With hells so fearful as those which have been described, it was only natural that the sinner guilty of any of the more flagrant crimes should think of expiation and penitence. This is the voice of nature in man which the grossest idolatry cannot wholly extinguish; but this, says Hinduism, is not absolutely necessary. He that bathes in the Ganges daily is thoroughly cleansed of all his crimes. This is the most important religious feature of the hour. The tradesman lies and defrauds his customers, and then sanctifies himself in the sacred stream; the murderer washes his bloody hands in its bounding current, and feels relieved of a heavy burden; and frail women are to be seen, day by day, under circumstances of peculiar indelicacy, washing away their sins. Even he 'who hears the story of the descent of the Gungá,' says the *Rámáyana*, 'shall have everything that his heart wishes fór. All his sins shall be destroyed, and his life and fame be abundantly prolonged;' and, as there are other rivers also whose waters have nearly the same efficacy, the whole country is well provided with the means of purification. Besides these provisions, there is the Bráhman's great toe, the touch of which sanctifies; while his right hand contains an inexhaustible quantity of sin-consuming fire, which is poured out with his benediction or *ásirvad*. Should even these fail, there is the repetition of holy names to annihilate demerit. Ajámil, a great criminal, saved himself by calling on his son 'Náráyana' (a name of Vishnu) at his last moments to bring him water; andVálmik, a robber, gained admittance into Bycant from having, in the pursuit of his profession, repeated the words 'Mar,' 'Mar' (kill, kill), which reversed make 'Rám,' 'Rám.' Then, again, the performance of *Havishya** in the

* This means the eating of rice and vegetables boiled together in one pot, without the addition of fish, flesh, or condiment of any kind.

months of Bysák, Kártika, and Mágh destroys the greatest sins; and some authorities gravely assert that Yama expressly directs his ministers to avoid approaching those persons who paint sacred marks on their body with chalk and mud, after certain fashions minutely described.

Superior to the general religion of the country is that of the Jains, the present phase of remnant Buddhism in India. Like the Buddhists, the Jains repudiate the *Veds*; but, like the modern Vysnubs and unlike the Buddhists, they adhere to caste. In other respects they are almost one with the Buddhists; but they explain *Nirván* more fully, by distinctly assigning to the liberated soul a spiritual life for ever and ever. 'As a bird let loose from a cage, plunging in water, washes off its dirt, and, drying its pinions, soars aloft never to return, so does the soul, released from its confinement, fly away for ever.' The morality the Jains inculcate is precisely the same with that inculcated by the Little Vehicle of the Buddhists; and they worship saints, of whom Ádináth, Parasnáth, and Mahávira are the most important.

Of the other revivals, that of the Bráhmos, who have recalled Vedantism into fresh life, is the most important. It will be more convenient, however, to notice the subject in the chapter on Young Bengal, by whom the religion has been rehabilitated.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS OF THE HINDUS.

THE actual condition of the people of India will perhaps best be understood from the superstitions generally prevalent among them; and, judged by this criterion, their position seems to be very low indeed. The absurdities and delusions believed in are many, and for such belief they have for the most part the best authority—that of their religion. The *Veds* teem with prayers and incantations to arrest and repel the molestation of aerial spirits, that crowd about the sacrifices to impede their consummation; and the *Puráns* fully endorse all the absurdities of the *Veds*. The belief in the existence of ghosts and apparitions is necessarily common, and all natural phenomenon which the people are not sufficiently educated easily to understand come thus to be attributed to supernatural and unearthly agencies; a result countenanced by the Bráhmans, to whom every form of superstition is a source of gain.

In every part of India the natives are afraid of ghosts, and the world of spirits is as present to their imagination almost as the world of matter by which they are surrounded. All forests, caverns, and ruins are haunted, and the causes of alarm are scarcely absent even from populous cities. The rustling of leaves, the crackling of walls or furniture, the scratchings of a cat or dog will cause terror; and a light blown out by the air will send a tremour of fear not only through the female mind but even through the minds of men. Many people maintain that they have seen

ghosts with their own eyes, and nothing will persuade them to believe that it was their fear or imagination only that gave rise to such conviction. One general item of belief is that family prosperity or misfortune is often indicated by premonitions in the shape of strange noises heard in the house at night; and violent diseases, such as raging fevers, epilepsy, and the like, are attributed to the influence of evil spirits effecting a lodgment in the body by force. Peculiar varieties of madness also are similarly accounted for; and an approved method of exorcism is to seize the patient by the hair and give him a sound beating with a slipper or broom till the spirit is expelled. If the treatment cures, as it sometimes does, it is sure to add a grain of popularity to the practitioner's reputation. If it does not cure, the ghost is believed to be that of either a Bráhman, a Mahomedan, or a Chandál, all of whom have distinct appellations to distinguish them, and have the credit of being the most obstinate of unearthly powers.

Of course, many houses are believed to be haunted. Some owe their ill-name to great crimes, like murder or suicide, committed within their walls; others have acquired it from trivial accidents, such as the explosion of fire or choke-damp, in them. The ill-name in some cases is so great that the houses are occupied by none but the old family, and are often allowed to fall into ruins when there are none of that family to abide in them. Once condemned, they never regain their good name; and those that come to be so abandoned never get purchasers. Hence, it is a common trick for would-be purchasers to spread a bad report of the buildings they wish to purchase, so that the price may go down. Thieves, also, concealing themselves and their booty in untenanted edifices, spread reports of their being haunted, and, if there be a large or old tree in or about the compound, the report circulates like wildfire, for sitting on an old tree or by a cold tombstone has, from time immemorial, been the melancholy occupation of ghosts in all countries. They must have a very high idea indeed of sublunary enjoyments who really believe that the spirits of

departed men can return to haunt the scenes of their bygone pleasures, filling the minds of their children and grandchildren with terror and anguish, for no higher purpose than to mourn for what cannot return to them!

Many ghosts are, however, believed to come on much higher errands. Those against whom heaven is closed may love to wander about the earth in sheer idleness, perhaps shrewdly suspecting that the other place for them is worse than the late theatre of their follies and crimes. But 'blasts from hell' are not the only visitants of the world. 'Spirits from heaven' are also believed to come occasionally to enlighten mankind. Such ghosts are generally held to be exceedingly well-bred, and do no harm. Mischievous spirits break doors and mock at people, or throw stones at them; but the spirits of the blessed come to warn or encourage those whom they visit. Fathers return to tell their sons to amend their lives and abandon their evil practices; faithful retainers bring counsel and advice to their masters, and forewarn them of anguish and misery; and mothers and grandmothers come to inform how heaven is to be propitiated and flattered by the erection of temples and the distribution of charity. The only occasions when good spirits come to frighten are when the spectres are the creatures of a disturbed conscience. When a miser believes that he has seen the image of him whose son's inheritance he has appropriated, the qualms and misgivings of his own heart make the visitation terrible; and people have fully yielded compliance with the implied requisition of such dangerous visitors when the reiterated prayers of living men have failed to propitiate their kindness or coax them to justice.

Nor is the belief in these visitations entertained only by the ignorant and the credulous. In all countries, and in India especially, it is largely shared in also by the good and wise. The impression that disembodied spirits may be permitted to visit the earth is perhaps, in some measure, founded on the hope of immortality, which assures us that the soul can never die, and, in some cases at least, the authen-

ticity of such visitations rests on the evidence of men of unimpeachable integrity. But, if there be really 'more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in philosophy,' this at least is certain, that we live in the kingdom of God, under the domination of eternal goodness, and that neither Satan in person nor the disembodied spirit of any human being representing him or acting under him for the nonce can have any power over us, unless we concede it to him. If 'blasts from hell' do visit the earth to cause disquietude and alarm, if to their agency is to be attributed some of the supernatural illusions that honest and trustworthy men have seen and spoken of, we have reason enough to be certain that the visitation is not an unauthorized one. Vengeful and spiteful ghosts come not but to oppressive and harsh masters. The mischievous master never returns to trouble his faithful servant. It is the slave—oppressed, bastinadoed, and abused—who, to avenge the injuries he suffered in life, reappears after death to knock at his master's door.

The belief in disembodied spirits being general in India, the existence of human agents of the devil is also widespread. We call those men agents of the devil who encourage the restless curiosity which makes people wish to dive into futurity, shake their reliance on the providence of God, and suggest unlawful means of assurance after arousing a feeling of insecurity. There are people in India, as elsewhere, who pretend that they can summon evil spirits to do their bidding, command them to appear and execute their orders, and then send them back again to their places of rest. There are particular days and hours for performing such feats, when they will unhesitatingly undertake the task before fit audience. Their easy assurance imposes on most people; charmed circles are drawn to confine the powers of darkness within them; and long prayers and incantations are muttered by the conjurer, and many spices and gums are burnt. If there be any error in the rite, or want of due precaution, the spirit comes in an angry mood, and is apt to do harm;

otherwise he is peaceful and obedient. Of course the whole business is a mummery. The necromancers themselves often affect to tremble from fear, which never fails to make a sensible impression on the company around them. In whispers and half-mutterings they hint that they see a multitude of spirits approaching together, more numerous than they would wish to come in contact with. The audience take alarm and fly; and the last scene is witnessed only by a few of the necromancer's own creatures, who vindicate his proficiency by bearing witness to his truth. Many respectable people encourage these performances by countenancing them. If persons wish to dance they will never be at a loss to find some one to pipe to them.

When men pretend that they can call spirits at their bidding, it is a comparatively smaller presumption to affect that they can also put them to flight. This, however, is an additional source of gain to the Bráhmans. They have rites and expiations, relics and charms, with which to allay the fears of ill-regulated minds, and by their arts pretend to restore that composure which a simple confidence in God was not able to secure. The most powerful charms against ghosts of all characters consist in wearing bits of iron constantly about the person, and in repeating the names of the gods—especially Ráma—on every occasion of alarm. Spirits of the most dreadful disposition are believed to yield to the enchantment, and should there be any of a particularly obstinate and malevolent character, there are expensive sacrifices and prayers to scare such away.

The belief in witches is universal in India; and all women and children wear amulets and talismans to preserve them from their influence, the greatest precaution being taken in the preparation of the charms, and in the collection of the ingredients of which they are composed. The evil-eye is so feared that one cannot praise a fine-looking or healthy boy without sending a thrill of alarm through the mother's heart, though every person that so praises him is not necessarily taken for a witch. Those

most feared and avoided are old women when they begin to dote; and what is curious is that they themselves, in the hope of acquiring power over their fellow-creatures, countenance their own bad name. So dear is power to the human heart that, far from striving to remove the ill impression entertained of them, many encourage it, that they might be feared in their dotage by the healthy and the young. This, however, is not invariably the case, for there are others who suffer much from the unfeeling insults of their neighbours and the scorn and hootings of the mob, which such impression always evokes.

The powers attributed to the witch are of marvellous character, but have reference mostly to the doing of evil. The greatest crime laid to her charge has, in all countries, been that she is fond of children as an article of diet. But how are they eaten? Not as the wolf devours its victim, after tearing him to pieces, but gradually, as a piece of lozenge dissolves in the mouth or in a glass of water. If a child grows sickly, it is imputed to the baleful glance of the witch; if it gets a loathing for food, the witch's influence accounts for it. When once people begin to believe in extraordinary things there is no telling how far they will go. They appear almost to vie with each other as to who shall believe most, till no fiction is too monstrous for their credulity. When the supposed witches visit the houses of the rich they are always propitiated by the females with presents of food and money, lest any harm should happen to the children; and, when they are insulted by the servants, it is very curious that some one or other of the little ones is sure to be laid up.

The witch is also believed to be expert in raising illicit love, in exciting affection or aversion between man and wife, in hindering the consummation of marriage, in raising in young men lust for old women, and *vice versâ*, and in fostering incestuous passions among relatives. Many a well-beloved wife often suddenly finds that she has, without any cause whatever, become an object of dislike to her husband. The circumstance appears perfectly inexplicable

to her, and, knowing no better, she imputes it to witchcraft. Many conscientiously believe that, with the aid of witches, harlots have the power of charming the affections of men, and even of inducing impotence and other diseases. They have known the fact within their own range of experience, and adopted the conclusion most satisfactory to their ignorance. The belief in love-potions is so extravagant that large numbers of old women have made it their profession to meet the demand. Every slighted wife is anxious to learn the art by which to inspire her husband with a violent passion for herself, and people are not wanting to take advantage of such anxiety. Many drugs and potions have thus come to be used in the *zenáná*, and some of them are undoubtedly injurious in effect. We often see the health of thoughtless young men prematurely shattered. This is generally imputed to their evil courses. Were the veil raised, a portion of the harm done might be traced to the well-meant interference of their simple-hearted wives. Bad stepmothers and stepmothers-in-law use these drugs yet more frequently, and certainly not, like the wives, in ignorance; and many an unfortunate case of atrophy and consumption may thus be accounted for.

The witch is further the great agent employed for the destruction of one's enemies; and the processes usually followed by her for the purpose are: melting images of wax, which represent the parties to be acted upon, before a slow fire, washing images of pounded rice gradually to thinness and decay, and pricking images of either wax or rice with pins and other instruments. Another method, also frequently used, is to carve the names of the persons proceeded against on the bark of a tree, and then to leave it to wither. We are not, however, to conclude that noxious herbs and minerals are never used. Where women often live on terms of deadly hatred towards each other, the natural inference is that they are employed, if not largely at least on particular occasions; and the old ladies of the *zenáná* are reported to be not unskilled in concocting poisons of different degrees of force for different purposes.

It would give us a very bad idea indeed of human nature if, among all the drugs and potions used, many were not altogether harmless, having no inherent virtue for good or evil. But the knowledge of their inefficacy rests only with those who prepare and sell them, those who use them believing implicitly in their alleged virtues. Barren women frequently take roots and drugs to have the cause of sterility removed. They have full confidence in the power of the nostrums they use, which they confidently believe to be impregnated with strong magical properties. It is only those who supply them that know that they are nothing more than mud or brick-dust prepared with sugar; and many women earn their livelihood by practising deceptions of this character.

Nor are females the only parties thus employed. Sharpers are of both sexes, and in India there are more male than female sharpers. Of course these are variously occupied. There are those who, having no knowledge of western sciences, can throw men into a mesmeric coma and induce a sleep which the application of fire or the piercing of pins will not disturb. Men thus mesmerized serve them as corpses, to which, before fit audiences, they give life. Palmistry, which has now travelled its round over all the world, and has been rooted out of every country in Europe, still retains its footing in the East, its ministers also being, for the most part, men; and many and constant are the references made to the lines of life and fortune on the hand. There are also prognosticators of weather, several of whom do really foretell storms and rain with much precision. They are good observers of the heavens, but are magicians rather by choice of others than of themselves. There are cheats, too, who dupe misers and others who are in a great hurry to get rich. They teach spells and ceremonies by which treasure-troves are to be traced. In India hidden treasures are abundant. Prudent men never thought their money safe till it was deposited underground. No investments were secure, and the hazard of keeping bullion in the house was great. The wars and

convulsions that desolated the country, as well as the violence and rapacity of its governors and viceroys, necessitated and brought the concealment of treasure underground into fashion. Many fled and died, or never returned to the sites where their stores lay hid, and the knowledge of the hiding-places died with them. These have been accidentally found; but, far from satisfying human cupidity, they have only provoked its ardency, and sharpers have not failed to take advantage of the circumstance.

Taking the nativity is another superstitious usage very common in India, where, in fact, it has been reduced to a profession by a class—the Dybagya Bráhmans—who follow the trade from sire to son. It rests on the belief that the stars have an influence over the destinies of men, and that by noting the presiding star of one's nativity his future career can be correctly foretold in all its *minutiæ* of good and evil, diseases, dangers, and accidents. At an early age the horoscopes of native children are written by the Áchárjyas, the documents being of different sizes and differing in detail according to the prices paid for them. Many of them indicate the changes from year to year, noting the number of a man's wives, the dates of his several marriages, the birth of his several children, whether he shall be rich or poor, beloved or hated, courted or despised, how his good haps and misfortunes shall come to pass, what, or of what character, will be his vocation during different stages of life, and the like; and they always terminate by indicating when the cup of iniquity will be full and death close the long, rambling history. In some cases it is also indicated how the subject of the horoscope will die—a natural or an unnatural, a peaceful or a violent death. But it is understood that the document is on no account to be seen, except by the family-priest, and that if it be read by any other the predictions will be falsified. When the parties, however, are rich the Bráhmans never fail to give broad hints of an unfavourable destiny, that steps might be taken to avert the threatened misfortune by timely penances and religious offerings.

The manufacture of horoscopes does not require to be analyzed, but we may mention in passing that the heavens are divided into several houses in which the planets are placed, and that these houses are understood to indicate riches, health, felicity, matrimony, friendship, fruitfulness in marriage, religious devotion, etc. The planets, also, are divided into kinds—namely, the auspicious and the inauspicious, the benignant and the malignant—and in whichever house they respectively preside, or, rather, are shown to preside, in those respects are the men held destined to be happy or unfortunate. Minute details of fortune or misfortune are only further amplifications of the scheme. Does a man lose his head for murder? It is all on account of the malignant star which was dominant at his birth. Does one commit suicide? The unlucky man had a hostile planet in the house of life when he was born. Is a man reduced to beggary? It is the malevolent natal star again, that triumphed over the milder influence of better planets in the house of riches at the natal hour; and so on. It is also predicted that at such and such an hour, on such and such a day, such and such good or ill fortune will come to pass; and this is done on the force of an affected calculation of what stars would be dominant in what houses—as ascertained from their relative positions at the hour of nativity—at different periods of existence.

Soothsayers, augurs, and diviners are common all over India, and the references to them are constant, and embrace all subjects—domestic, mercantile, and political. One of the most thriving of these practitioners is the thief-finder, who pretends to make his discoveries by the divining-rod. Sometimes property is discovered by him, the mystery of which is easily explained. We have only to suppose that there are among the class people well versed in the pursuit of knavery, good spies in getting at a clue and in following it out. In nine cases out of ten the finder is a wolf turned lamb for the time, the head of a gang of thieves himself; and, if he finds the case one in which false scent can be given to mislead inquiry, he acts accordingly; but if he

finds otherwise, he only takes advantage of his affected character to turn the tide of inquiry in an untoward direction, discovers the property, and confounds the search. The property found, people do not care to press the quest further, and thus either way he serves his own ends.

The process of discovery is very simple. The man who volunteers to make the discovery asks to be shown into the room where the lost article had been lodged, and then at his own appointed hour comes with his divining-rod in his hand, which he affects draws him on to follow it. He pursues his whimsical course accordingly, mentioning, as the rod in his hand strikes, or rather as he strikes with it, certain places—how here the article had been secreted, how it was carried away again, what things were touched and moved, and the like, to give his knavery the semblance of truth. He often follows the traces of the thief far in this manner, for when he finds it impossible to effect a real discovery—a case which always happens when he has had no hand in the affair—or when he is disposed to frustrate the search, he has no alternative but to weary his followers by long courses up and down, hither and thither, and then to stop either at the door of some rich man's house or by the banks of a river, when of course further inquiry has to be given up as impracticable.

Nor is the rod the only means used for tracing out a thief. A *lotáh* or other vessel is often made use of for the purpose, when the search is confined within the limits of a particular room or house in which all the suspected parties are collected together. Prayers and charms are then recited, and it is said the *lotáh* moves of its own accord towards the thief, and stops on coming up to him!

Then, again, there are interpreters of dreams, who exercise no mean influence on the credulity of the people. Pharaoh was not the only man who felt his spirit troubled on awakening from his sleep. Many others have found their dreams equally unpleasant, and among the Hindus the anxiety to have them explained is great. One of the

causes of this is the general belief in India that in sleep the soul is separated from the body. Some philosophers have maintained that, after this separation, it immediately goes up, for the time, to heaven, and joins the Soul of the Universe. But this is too obscure for general acceptance; and the popular idea, content with the separation, sends it hither and thither in a manner that mesmerism and clairvoyance would be astounded to think of. As a matter of course, its waking thoughts and actions are not believed to influence it in this state; and the view taken of the subject in other parts of the world is thus directly rejected in the East. Fortunately, cheats are not much resorted to in the interpretation of dreams. The goodwife of the house has all the rules bearing on the subject engraved on her memory, they being simple in themselves, and answering in all manner of cases likely to arise. Nay, not only are dreams thus eagerly sought to be read, but many minuter trifles also. If the ear burns, if the eye twinkles, if the tongue is bitten accidentally, they must needs be interpreted, for they are all signs of coming weal or woe, and the interpreters before expounding them are careful to inquire which ear burnt and which eye twinkled, for much is believed to depend on the circumstance.

When dreams are of importance, nightmares cannot be otherwise. Our readers must have all of them felt the nightmare—the oppression on the chest, the impossibility of stirring or calling out for aid,—though they may never have seen the necessity of going beyond the limits of natural causes for an explanation of the fit. The imagination of the Hindu sympathises more actively with his superstition, and many Hindus will seriously declare that they have seen a cat or a baboon astride on the breast, or something like a large stone placed upon it, vanishing as it were before their waking eyes, when flinging off an attack of the incubus. What is it, then—this cat, baboon, or moving granite? Why, the spirit of some accursed enemy, of course, who, unable to forget his earthly grudge, visits his sleeping foe to oppress him! To secure the bed from such

an unruly visitant, the doors and windows are well barred; but, nevertheless, he comes again. 'You cannot close every crevice and hole in the house,' points out an old fox of a priest; 'give more to the Bráhmans, and perform penances and fasts, if you would drive away the devil in earnest.' Gifts are accordingly made to the Bráhmans, penances and rites performed, and fasts punctually observed; and, strange to tell, the goblin comes no more!

In sleep men have been known to rise out of their beds and do many marvellous things. They have passed dangerous places in perfect security—places which they would not have ventured to approach in their waking hours. We need not inquire into the mystery of these achievements. How the sleeping body is carried easily from place to place, doctors will explain. According to the Hindus, all this is the devil's doing. The sleeper gets out of bed, unbars his door, runs out of the house, climbs up to high places or other unusual haunts, and then comes to bed quietly again and knows nothing of the matter when he awakes. How could all this be done without supernatural agency? Sometimes he gets into danger, breaks his neck or limbs by a fall, perhaps loses his life. This no man would do voluntarily; it must necessarily be the work of the devil.

Many are the pranks thus played on men by the powers of darkness, but we cannot well refer to all of them here. We shall only notice the *ignis fatuus*, or flitting-fires, which a very learned Bráhman, deeply read in the *Veds*, proved to us to be the souls of men untimely cut off, who avenge their own wrongs on the race by leading others into danger. They are generally to be met with in marshy localities, and in places where the dead are burnt, or where carcasses are exposed to decay. Western philosophers call them vapours emanating from decaying materials. 'But why,' sagaciously asks the Bráhman, 'should vapours mislead men and bring them into peril, pray?'

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE PÁRSEES, YOUNG BENGAL, AND THE BRÁHMOS.

WE should have properly devoted in this place one chapter at least to describe the British conquest of India and its effects, but do not do so because we have already noticed the subject in a separate work* and are unwilling to go over the same track again. For our present purpose it will be sufficient to refer generally to the intellectual degradation of the country before the English era, and then to note how that condition was affected by the conquest achieved.

The decay of Hindu learning dates from the time of the Mahomedans. The spirit of Bráhmanism and the Shástras kept the knowledge of the *Veds* and their *Angas* confined to one class alone; and this was bad enough, because the *Angas* of the *Veds* comprised all the sciences and literature of the country, including grammar, versification, arithmetic, and the mathematics. But the rule of the Mahomedans made matters worse. The Bráhman had only struggled tooth and nail to put down high education among the mass, lest it should open his arcana to the vulgar gaze; what the Mahomedan did was to put down all kinds of popular education, except what could be acquired through the medium of his own language. During the whole Mahomedan era in the country, not a petition to any court of justice could be addressed in any language but that of the conquerors; the study of the vernaculars was expressly tabooed; even an Ákbar could only rise to

* *Bengal*, chapter ix.

the liberality of patronising the cultivation of the dead languages—the study of the *Veds* and the *Puráns*. No place of trust or emolument was attainable under any of the sovereigns without a knowledge of the Persian language. There was no indigenous education in the country but what was of a very rudimentary character, and this among a people inordinately fond of letters. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that general ignorance culminated, as we have seen, in the worship of stocks and stones as gods, and in the belief in ghosts, witches, and fortune-tellers.

This was the state of things which the British Government came forward to rectify. It entered the country when civilisation was at a stand-still in it, nay, when it had long commenced to retrograde. Reason, for want of exercise, had become paralysed; repugnance to investigation was general; habits of indolence had reached their climax; and the stupefaction of ages was settling down everywhere on a firm and immovable basis. A complete change of policy was required—a renovation of vitality by electricity or magnetism: and this it was in the power of the English, and the English alone, to impart. They brought to the task the aid of European civilisation of the highest order. The inventions of art and the researches of science were made to bear on a dense insensibility which they alone could break up and disperse, and to force intellectual and moral improvement amongst those who were running aground on the quicksands of superstition and tyranny. Well did England perform the duty, and no Hindu will be found so ungrateful as not to acknowledge it. A light was kindled in the very bosom of error which is now lighting up everything around it; the general apathy to strike into any new path soon became a thing of the past; and two classes were called forth into existence, both imbued with new ideas and aspirations, both determined to assert their right to be even with the times. These two classes are the Párseees of Bombay, and Young Bengal—both at present mostly aping their conquerors, not only in their virtues, but also in their vices; but both

destined in time to work great ends, and especially to promote knowledge and enlightenment in the land. The Pársees are the descendants of the ancient Persians, or Áhoors, who fled before the Arabs when Yezdijird III. was driven from his throne, and who, arriving at Diu, were finally settled in Guzerát, but never mixed much either with the Hindus or the Mahomedans. Young Bengal is the name of the indigenous patriots of the country developed in Bengal—which has the pass in matters of education—and who are designated by their admirers the 'Hopes' of India. They are the real fruits of the revolution that was inaugurated on the field of Plassey. There would have been no Young Bengal to speak of if the Mahomedan rule had been perpetuated.

We give precedence to the Pársees, as aliens on the soil, who will necessarily require less attention from us than the Bengalis, from whom much greater benefit to the country is naturally expected. After their arrival in India, the Pársees remained unnoticed for upwards of nine hundred years, and only commenced to attract attention at about the same time when the Europeans appeared on the scene. They, therefore, like Young Bengal, owe everything to the British conquest of the country, before which period they were only too glad to remain unknown. They have been licked into shape entirely by the English, and, having a better religion than the Hindus, have benefited more promptly by the instruction and encouragement they have received. The religion of the *Zendávestá* is superior to the religions both of the *Veds* and the *Puráns*, even though it has caught much impurity in the course of time. It emphatically enjoins the worship of One God, to whom its founder called back his followers after the Áhoor wars; but, as the mass still wanted a visible deity, he was obliged subsequently to yield to expediency, and to establish the sun and the four elements as the media of devotion. It directs, further, the worship of the cow, the feeding of the sacred flame, and the performance of ceremonies, including ablutions with the *go-mutra*, or the

urine of cows. This, doubtless, is bad enough, but still it is better than the Hindu religions to which we have re-referred, inasmuch as it does not bind down the aspirations of its followers, so long as its primary injunctions are observed. The Pársee, with a formal observance of his faith, can go where he likes and do what he pleases. But the Bengali has no similar liberty accorded to him; the sacrifice demanded of him is very much greater; if he wants to be a consistent reformer, he must cease to be a Hindu. It is for this reason mainly that the Pársees have, up to this time, worked better as the pioneers of improvement in India, though, as a rule, they are much inferior to the Bengalis both in natural intelligence and education.

The Pársees are more imitative even than the Bengalis; and, their idolatry of the Englishman being also greater, they have dogged his footsteps with persistent pertinacity almost in all matters of practical utility. Wherever wealth was to be acquired, the Pársee has followed the Briton with untiring energy. His spirit of adventure and enterprize has thus been fully exercised and developed, and, in due course, crowned with success. He has also copied the manners and habits of the Englishman with great precision, lives in the same liberal style, and treats his women altogether better than the Hindus, though, of course, the females of the lower classes have still to perform domestic duties, including kitchen-work, and the fetching of water from the wells. For all their liberalism, however, the Pársees do not sit down at meals with their females; and they have also early marriages among them, which, to a great extent, are needful in warm climates. When they are taxed with these shortcomings, they very conveniently attribute them * to their proximity to the Hindus, from which many evil customs, they say, have been contracted by them, while they attribute all their good qualities to the superiority of their nationality and faith. There is no doubt, however, that, altogether, they appear to greater advantage at this moment than the Bengalis,

* See Framjee's *Pársees*.

particularly in respect to public spirit, which has been better developed among them. They are, nevertheless, quite as wanting in courage as the Bengalis, and most undeniably more so than the Mahomedans. No Pársee has ever carried arms, though even Bengalis are known to have done so; *e.g.*, Shitáb Rái, who distinguished himself in the battle of Gheriáh, near Sootee. Comparisons are, however, proverbially 'odorous,' and there is no reason for continuing them.

Young Bengal came into existence a long while after the Pársees, and has been much slower in rising into importance. They are both imitations of the Anglo-Saxon models of character and intelligence, but did not start in the race with the same advantages and disadvantages. The Pársee was ready dressed when the signal for the race was given; but Young Bengal was deeply imbedded then in his slough of despondence and dirt, from which he had a hard struggle to emerge. The Hindus, treated with contempt by their Mahomedan conquerors, had become contemptible; the arts of civilisation had been abandoned; the desire of excelling in worthy undertakings given up: and this was the slough of dirt and despondence which Young Bengal had to break through. The effects of idolatry on the nation had been very injurious. Says the *Gítá*: 'He who worships matter becomes matter,' or a blockhead; and the Hindu mind had certainly been stupefied and paralysed to that extent. What false religion had bound down, what misrule and oppression had all but crushed out, was now suddenly liberated; and the intellect of the nation, set at large, lost no time in clearing itself for the start. The rage for imitating the Englishman was naturally called forth by the very interest he took in the welfare of the Hindu; but Young Bengal had a greater amount of scorn and ridicule to endure than Young Bombay or Young Madras, because he tried from the outset most to rival the Englishman in his education. Imitation the Englishman did not object to, so long as it was not a close one. Rivalry he affected to laugh at and despise.

Young Bengal has fully justified his aim by attaining it. If there has been any progress anywhere, that progress has been achieved by him. Calcuttá has always taken the lead in all important movements; the first Indian who went to England was a Bengali; the first Indian who entered the Civil Service was a Bengali; the first Indians who entered the Medical Service and the Bar were Bengalis. Bengalis are now prosecuting their studies in Cambridge and Oxford. It is only as merchants and artisans that the Pársees have taken the shine out of the Bengalis. As travellers also the Pársees may still be said to be ahead of the Bengalis, though the Bengalis are not very much in the rear. They are to be found now all over India, and beyond it. There are those who have been to Afghánistán and Central Asia; and the best official reports regarding Central Asia have been furnished by Hindu Pundits. What the Bengalis are most in advance in, however, is their English education, which is permeating, not the higher classes only, but much below the high-class line, many of the best specimens of Young Bengal having risen from the humblest ranks of life.

The partiality of Young Bengal for an English education has been much traduced. It has even been characterized as unpatriotic. 'Why on earth is he so wedded to English books? Why does he not read the *Veds, Puráns,* and *Itiháses?*' Those who condemn him on this account forget conveniently that whatever he has been able to achieve has been achieved by his English education only. The dry bones of Oriental literature would not have raised either the morality or the life of the nation. What book, including the *Veds* and the *Puráns,* is there in the country that could displace Bacon, Milton, and Addison, without re-calling the ages of Oriental gloom? A knowledge of the English language is certainly not to be considered as a standard of individual excellence; but it throws open every avenue to truth and rectitude, and the best specimens of the cláss are undoubtedly to be found among those only who have cultivated it well.

But the Bengali has not been unpatriotic in his love for the English language. That the Bengali language has been developed in spite of the antagonistic genius of Bráhmanism and the withering influence of Mahomedanism, has been the work almost of Young Bengal alone. We fully remember that it was missionary enterprise that first cleared the way. The services of Drs. Carey, Marshman, and Ward, and of the Calcutta School Society, can never be forgotten. But, for all their exertions, the missionaries only left behind them a poor dialect and a poor literature. That it has since been enriched and elevated, that a vocabulary has been added to it, that the syntax has been modified, and that its construction has been amplified and improved, has been entirely the work of Young Bengal. He has also started a lot of newspapers and magazines both in English and Bengali; and, if it be true, as Bulwer says, that the newspaper is the chronicle of civilisation, Young Bengal has not only inaugurated the civilisation, but also the appliances to record its progress.

Slowly, but manfully, has young Bengal worked up to the light. We do not wish to over-estimate or to flatter him; but we cannot deny that he has attained a position—become a power in the state—by his own exertions, and that if the good work goes on at the rate in which it has been advancing, he will elevate his country in a short time to a much higher position than she has ever held. It would not be true now to say that the natives of the country are inferior either in talents or in probity to the middle-class men of England generally. Against the Old Hindu it was a constant charge that he was not honest, that he was particularly fond of illegal perquisites, that bribery and corruption brought him no stigma or disgrace so long as wealth and independence were secured by them. But these features of social life have now ceased to exist; Young Bengal has been found under every trial to be true to the backbone—quite as trustworthy as the best specimens of the English race. Inefficiency was also frequently urged against the past generation; but the ability of Young

Bengal is as unquestionable as his integrity. Why is it, then, that Young Bengal is disliked by that very people to whom he owes all his virtues? Why do the rulers in India receive him with coldness and reserve? Would it be wrong if we said that the Englishman now feels that he is everywhere jostled by that very body whom he was before so anxious to patronise; that he calls the native vain, empty-headed, and half-educated only because he feels his close pressure to be exceedingly inconvenient? For our own part we wish heartily that the jostling may be yet more close—not at the desk only, but at the factory, the anvil, and the mill. The Englishman has no business in India if he finds the Hindu to be in his way.

By his education principally has Young Bengal reached the position he occupies; and this has also improved his private virtues, and effected considerable alteration in his modes of life. The domestic virtues are now better cultivated in India than they used to be before. Young Bengal is a more constant husband than the Old Hindu was; and, if he is not a kinder, he is perhaps a discreeter, parent. Whether he is as liberal-hearted towards the poor as the Old Hindu was may perhaps be questioned; but if he appears to disadvantage in that respect, that is not to be attributed to a colder heart, but to his English education, which sets a dead face against promiscuous charity. In all other ways he is doing much good to the country. A large number of the class are devoted to letters, and as schoolmasters are directing, in an unobtrusive manner, the progress of education; others are managing their paternal estates with greater ability and fairness towards the peasant classes than was known in the past; others, again, are engaged in commercial speculations, and displaying more honesty and probity in that course of life than was hitherto held to be practicable in it. The Medical College opened one wide sphere of usefulness which was at once promptly and largely availed of, which has supplied the whole country with medical practitioners who are both cheap and efficient. The study of law opened another sphere of profit at least,

if not of usefulness, and there was such a rush to it that the law market is already overstocked. For the Civil Service and the Bar a visit to England has always been held necessary; but even this was risked for the superior advantages they offered. Unfortunately, all these courses of life together did not exhaust the energy and efficiency that were evoked, and, for want of better employment, a large number of young men were compelled to plunge themselves headlong into the vortex of Keránydom—the rock upon which all hopes and aspirations are shattered. With the education of Young Bengal there ought to be allied some share of that spirit of enterprize that characterizes the Pársee, who not only follows the English lead in letters, but also in the occupations of everyday life. Many spheres of usefulness remain yet unoccupied, and most of them carry independence with them. All the trades are open for adoption; artists are in great demand in all the great cities of India; farming on scientific principles is nowhere understood at present, and promises a very remunerative occupation. The questions will occur of themselves to those in search of useful employment: 'Why not be the plodding, industrious, and frugal tradesman? Why not introduce the use of improved implements of husbandry? Why not rear cattle for human consumption?' Of course there is a prejudice still against these professions being followed by the higher classes; but in the nature of things such prejudices cannot last for ever. Menu and Vyasa have no right to dictate rules of respectability now. The people have already accepted another dispensation of practical utility, and must abide by it.

Great literary attainments will not be required in most of the lines of life we have indicated; what will be mainly required are habits of usefulness, industry, and frugality. The youths of Bengal have learnt English literature well: they must now acquire the excellent habits of the English workman, that fit him almost for every sphere of life; and that must be done without abandoning their literary pursuits. A good education, even when not required in the

course of business, is absolutely necessary on other grounds. At present, it is this only that gives the Bengali a decided superiority over the Pársee. If he abandons it he goes down plump before the Pársee, hopelessly and for ever. 'Without independence,' says Junius, 'no man can be happy, or even honest.' Choose for worldly purposes then, the lines of life that lead to the ease and repose of wealth; but a good education is wanted for yet higher ends. The object of education is to develop and discipline the mind, to form habits of accurate thinking, to store the mind with general knowledge, to fortify and elevate the character by moral discipline. These are indispensable to all. If Young Bengal is in uprightness, fidelity, and truth superior to his ancestors, he owes his superiority entirely to his English education. He has appreciated that education fully; it is not in his power now to abandon it. He should in fact try to pursue it still more sedulously; for is he not yet much bound down by the trammels of caste and a perverted religion from which he would wish to disentangle himself thoroughly?

That idolatry has still its votaries and the institution of caste its admirers among the youths of India cannot be denied; and what makes the case worse is, that the devotion and belief of these adherents is not only unsteady but insincere. We know that there are at the same time many of the Young Bengal class, who, far from bowing to an idol, will not even enter a house where idol-worship is being celebrated; but exceptions of this nature do not absolve the majority of the charge of hypocrisy to which they are constantly exposing themselves. It is not the ultra-patriotic and anti-temperance section of Young Bengal only that is found to be thus vacillating and infirm in its convictions, but even the very best educated and the most liberal. Their modes of life have not yet been changed by many; but that we don't find fault with, as a close imitation of the European modes of life is neither necessary nor advantageous. At home many educated Bengalis put off their *trousers* and *chápkáns*, and wear the

*idhot* and the *chádur* like any other Hindu. This, far from being reprehensible, seems to savour strongly of good sense, as the adoption of English clothing and habits is not in every case well suited to the country, and all close imitations are necessarily ridiculous. In fact, the imitations have been already much too close, not simply in the matter of boots and trousers, but also as regards the use of brandy and beer. Young Bengal, in his go-ahead zeal, has often forgotten that what is cordial to the English constitution is poison to that of the Hindu; and the rage for imitation has deluged the country with potations that were never intended for it. We read in Luke that Gabriel, the angel of the Lord, told unto Zacharias that his son John would be great in the sight of God, and would drink *neither wine nor strong drink.* This is the text for Young Bengal most carefully to study. 'Don't imitate your model blindly,' say we unto him; 'don't copy the follies and vices of the Englishman, who with his northern blood will safely tide over temptations which will inflame you to madness; but, at the same time, do not vacillate on questions of life and death importance both to you and to your country; do not with your education and civilisation affect at one moment to be an orthodox Hindu, and at another an Ultra Reformer.'

It is his inconsistency and vacillation that has given the enemies of Young Bengal the haudle to cry him down; and bitterly has this enmity been exhibited. But Englishmen in India should never forget that the Young Bengal party, with all its shortcomings, is still that of improvement and progression. It aims after a complete reconstruction of the social fabric on the English model, modified by climatic requirements. Is there anything in this to justify abuse and hostility? The constant fear on the part of the Englishman is the assertion of equality with him that Young Bengal affects; but actually no aspiration for such equality exists. If Englishmen will receive the Hindus with superciliousness and contempt, the Hindus will naturally do their best to drag down Englishmen to

an equality with themselves if they can. But in reality the Hindu does not profess to any higher honour than that of imitation; Young Bengal, Young Madras, and Young Bombay all plainly and explicitly admit that they are merely the outcome of the Englishman's exertion. It is English education that has made them what they are. It has of course encouraged many hopes. Why was ambition awakened, if it was not to be satisfied? It was the Englishman that encouraged the Hindu to better his condition, and held out the promise of bettering his status. The Hindu has vindicated the teaching he received; does it befit the Englishman now to turn round and call him names, because he has become what the Englishman wished him to become?

Absolute equality with Englishmen Young Bengal will never claim. His physical development can never be equal to his mental and intellectual development. Even if he were to change his diet—which wisely he has not, as a rule, done up to this moment—he would never benefit by the change beyond the extent to which the Mahomedan may have done so; he will never acquire the vigour of the English frame. He knows, moreover, that the rights of conquest are rights which will always be asserted. What he ventures under such circumstances to point out is, that there are other rights also which justify some concessions being made to him, particularly as he has been called forth into existence by the fiat of his conquerors. To rampant Englishmen the idea seems monstrous that a number of Báboos should aspire to share the loaves and fishes of India with them. But is it not more monstrous that, notwithstanding the existence of such a class as Young Bengal, the country should continue to be held, not simply in political and military, but also in administrative bondage, from one extremity of it to the other? Every one knows that the first proof to be given of a nation's capacity for self-government is the expulsion of its foreign rulers by force of arms; and this proof Young Bengal is not able to advance. But has he not given other proofs which justify

the claims to *favour* which he has put forward? A greater hostage of fidelity one nation cannot give to another than Young Bengal has given to his conquerors by the extensive adoption of their ways, habits, literature, and language in preference to those of his own race; and Englishmen of all others should not be indifferent to this. The plea of governing India for the Indians has been largely paraded. Young Bengal simply challenges the Englishman to justify the boast. No arrangement whatever is suggested that would be incompatible with safety to English rule in the East. No one wishes so much for the continuation of that rule as the Hindu does. All that he aspires to is, that he may be held worthy to be trusted as a supporter of that rule.

One great charge against Young Bengal is his want of religion; and this has been urged strenuously both by the English missionary and by the Old Hindu. If the rising generation have not renounced Hinduism openly they have certainly done so practically; and what have they accepted in place of it? It is true that some professed even from the outset to be theists after Hume and Gibbon, and others to be Unitarian Christians, but unbaptized; but of the greater number it was still true for a long time that, after having given up their old faith they seemed to be in no haste to adopt a new one. It would be unjust however to conclude from this that they were atheists or infidels; every man is not either an atheist or an infidel, as in common parlance he is supposed to be, who is not wedded to a creed by name. We judge leniently of those whose lives give evidence of piety; and the youths of Bengal are not, and have not latterly been, very deficient in morals. One gentleman of the class on being asked what his religion was, answered: 'It is Christianity without Christ, Mahomedanism without Mahomet, Hinduism without its three hundred and thirty millions of Christs and Mahomets. I make the Creator my study in His works; I read His laws in all I see around me; and the book thus open, I find sufficient to meet all my spiritual wants.' That there

were and are many others of the same stamp ought to be readily admitted, and to condemn such men as irreligious would hardly be correct.

A large portion of Young Bengal, but still the minority, have since openly accepted a definite religion by the revival of Vedantism. This movement was originated in 1828, when the *Bruhmu Subhá* of Calcuttá was established by Rájáh Rámmohun Roy, for prosecuting the study of the *Vedánta*, and for aiding in its promulgation; and, when it began to languish, the *Tattwabodhini Subhá* was originated, in 1839, by a party of ten friends to secure the same ends. The subsequent changes have been many. The two *Subhás* were amalgamated, and under their joint exertion several branch *sumájes* were founded in many of the Mofussil out-stations of Bengal. But, afterwards, the *Subhás* again parted company, and Bráhmoism, itself a new creed, was thus early divided into sects or parties, which are however not directly antagonistic to each other.

The doctrines preached by the Bráhmos are fundamentally the same with those of the *Vedánta* and the *Upanishads*, but with considerable modifications to suit the requirements of the age. The Bráhmos say expressly that the philosophy of Vyasa has nothing whatever to do with their religion; and, though they do not as openly discard the *Upanishads*, they affirm clearly that they are constantly endeavouring to improve their faith, and to assimilate it with everything that is good and beautiful. Theirs is free inquiry of the freest kind. They first picked out of the *Veds* and the *Vedánta* whatever squared with their ideas of morality and truth, and then continued the same process with the Bible and the *Korán*; and, after having thus compiled a select code for themselves, they ask complacently—'Are we not ahead of the world?' The *Vedánta* of Vyasa, however, still exists. It is to this day followed by the *Dundis* and other orthodox sectarians; and it is necessary therefore to point out how far the Bráhmos have departed from it.

The *Vedánta* declares the Supreme Ruler to be *destitute*

*of qualities*, the possession of qualities being considered to be irreconcilable with perfection. It allows Him those physical attributes only which are indispensable to a First Cause, but none other. The Bráhmos, on the contrary, maintain that *God possesses all qualities, those only excepted which vacillate, change, and perish*, to dress Him in which would be to liken the atom of a day to the everlasting.—*All spirit*, says the *Vedánta*, *is homogeneous*, and the spirit of God the same in kind, though not in degree, with that of man. 'The whole meaning of the *Vedánta* is comprised,' says Sadánanda, 'in this, that Bruhmu and individuated spirits are one.' But the Bráhmos discard these dogmas as absurd, and maintain that *human spirit is altogether distinct from the Divine Spirit*, and *is not like it uncreate.*—The Vedantists assert that *a knowledge of God transforms the soul of man into sameness with the Deity*, and that the highest object of religious meditation is to discover that the worshipper is identical with Bruhmu. 'As pure water dropped into the limpid lake becomes such as that is,' so is the soul of him who has attained the perfection of divine knowledge the same with Bruhmu. But the Bráhmos repudiate the doctrine as abhorrent, and believe *in a distinct future state of conscious existence for man, in which the highest grade of felicity, resembling that of the Deity, may be attained.*—The *Vedánta* and the *Upanishads* invariably represent God to be *unconnected with the cares of the world*, He being 'like one asleep;' but the Bráhmos stoutly maintain that *He is eternally awake and ever watchful, and is incessantly assigning to His creatures their respective purposes*, and that by His 'inscrutable providence all things are tending to ultimate and universal welfare.'—The Bráhmos maintain that the worship of God consists in the contemplation of His moral and natural attributes, and in the obedience of His laws, which includes *the practice of virtue*; but the practice of virtue forms no part of the worship of the Vedantists, who, on the contrary, believe that *it stands so far in the way of salvation that, even when the knowledge of God is*

*acquired, the devotee cannot obtain emancipation till the effect of His works is worn out*; 'for the arrow which has been shot completes its flight, nor falls to the ground till its speed is spent, and the potter's wheel, once set in motion, whirls till the velocity communicated to it is exhausted.'—The Vedantists require *a total renunciation and forgetfulness of the world* as imperatively necessary to the attainment of liberation; 'liberation,' says the text, 'is to be obtained only by divine wisdom, which cannot exist in the mind without wholly extinguishing all consciousness of outward things by meditation on the one Bruhmu.' But the Bráhmos object to such sacrifice and apathy, and strongly maintain that *a life of activity is a life of godliness*.—The *Vedánta* declares the laws of God to be immutable and unbending: obey them faithfully and they carry their own reward with them; disobey them and you suffer—not from the satisfaction of the Deity in one case, or His dissatisfaction in the other, but from the system of government He has been pleased to establish. This is also admitted by the Brahmos; but, they add, that evil deeds may nevertheless be expiated *by repentance and an earnest endeavour to avoid transgressions*, which is contrary to the Vedántic doctrine that *crimes can only be cancelled by good works*, on the principle on which debts are cancelled by obligations.—The Bráhmos direct that *the appetites and passions be held in control and the better class of affections be exercised*; while the *Vedánta* maintains that they should all be annihilated and extirpated by those who wish for liberation.—Finally, the Bráhmos maintain that *God created the world out of nothing*; while the Vedantists as stoutly assert that 'nothing can come out of nothing,' and that *the world is therefore only an illusory modification of spirit*, educed by Máyá, which is itself unreal.

The peculiar doctrines of the Bráhmos, as distinguished from those of the Vedantists, may therefore be thus summed up: They believe in the existence of a Supreme Ruler possessed of superlative and infinite attributes. They believe

that He is altogether distinct from other existences, and not essentially the same with any of them. They believe that no knowledge, however vast, no rectitude, however great, can transform a human being into sameness with the Deity, though it may elevate him to a felicity resembling that of the Creator. They recognise Him in the light of a provident father, ever watchful, and so regulating the whole creation by inscrutable means as to make everything lead to ultimate and universal welfare. They believe in a moral government of the universe, in which obedience is knowledge, virtue, and happiness, and disobedience ignorance, vice, and misery; and they assert that the worship of God consists in this obedience, which includes the practice of active virtues. The actions of life, they state, are compensated by a designed adjustment of rewards and punishments; but repentance, they still contend, is useful as an expiation of crime. And they regard life as a state of progression, in which advance is to be made only by purifying our passions and inclinations, to which end directions are carefully laid down.

This short summary, if we have herein represented the belief of the Bráhmos aright, comprises, we believe, the sum-total of their departure from the faith of the Vedantists, and it cannot be denied that, by this deviation, they have materially improved the old creed. Young Bengal has fully vindicated both his common-sense and judgment by the modifications he has adopted, and it is a matter of very secondary importance that all those modifications are not orthodox. Most of the new ideas have been borrowed from other religions, or educed from the innate consciousness of human nature; and the Bráhmos courageously assert that it is so. The only question that really arises is, whether the religion thus manufactured is superior to Christianity, which is offered to the people by the missionaries. But this does not come into practical consideration, owing to the progress of Christian conversion in the country having, up to this time, been very poor. India does not promise to be Christianized in a hurry; it is to be

feared that she will never be wholly or extensively Christianized. The single point for decision, therefore, is, whether Bráhmoism does not offer to the people a better religion than those to which they have hitherto been accustomed. Vedantism, *pure et simple*, is too difficult and metaphysical to answer the wants of the rising generation; Pouránism is too absurd to satisfy them; nor can they now go back to the simplicity of the *Sanhitas*. For the really educated minority theism, as they understand it, has answered, and may continue to answer. But for the mass some general religion is absolutely necessary; and, if Bráhmoism supplies that want, it will have achieved a great good, greater than any that has been attempted since the days of Chaitanya.

## CHAPTER XV.

### HINDU WOMEN; THEIR CONDITION AND CHARACTER.—PART I.

THE women of India form a more interesting theme of inquiry even than Young Bengal and the Pársees, particularly as much is not known of them at present to the outside world, from the general unwillingness of the natives to speak on the subject. According to the customs of the country, women are never spoken of in company; and for a stranger to ask about them is accounted either as a mark of ignorance of the national manners, or a wilful infringement of them. The research of Europeans has, nevertheless, been very persistent, and one thing at least is now clearly understood, that the chief feature of female life in India is the cultivation of the domestic virtues, to which all the laws and lawgivers of the ancient world, including the Bible itself, attached the greatest importance. We shall endeavour, in this and the following chapter, to give a sketch of the inner life of the ladies of Bengal, of whom we know best; but our remarks will not on that account be the less applicable to the ladies of the rest of the peninsula, as their general condition and character scarcely differ from those of their sisters of Bengal.

On the condition of unmarried females there is not much to say, as that condition embraces a period of ten years only, reckoned from the earliest days of infancy, within which interval most of them are married, or, as the expression goes, are disposed of. The birth of a female child is for the most part an undesired event in a native

family; but they err who assert that female children are branded as sources of regret, and are never smiled upon till they have been given away in marriage. If the Shástras have considered it of importance to regulate nicely the estimation in which the children of different sexes should be held, if the position of women in the country makes even the fondest father wish at heart that his girl had been a boy, it does not necessarily follow that the sex of a child is a perpetual torment to its parents; nor is it true that a female infant is slighted more pointedly in India than in other parts of the world. So far as children are concerned, all the world over there seems to be only one feeling on the subject, namely, that boys are preferred to girls; but not even in India has superstition or custom so far triumphed over nature as to make a child anything but dear unto its parents, irrespective of its sex. The redemption of a Hindu in after life depends, according to his religion, on the lives of his children; and, in this respect, the male child of a daughter has the same privilege as its own sons. It is not likely, therefore, that the daughter should be slighted solely for her sex.

The children are earlier separated in India than in most other countries. At seven or eight years no boy will put up with the impropriety of having a girl for his playfellow; and girls often cease to mingle in the society of boys even in the nursery, if they can pick up friends of their own sex. How far the old remark that sisters love their brothers better than they love each other is correct, we know not; but in India sisters seem to prefer each other's company to that of their brothers. This is partly, if not entirely, owing to the dissimilarity of training marked out for the sexes even at that age. Boys go to school to learn to read and write, or are set to those pursuits at home. But the Hindu does not care so much for the culture of the female mind, and girls are suffered to grow up in ignorance. All the mental training imparted to them consists of the lectures they receive from their mothers, which embrace a variety of subjects, inclu-

sive of religion. The principles of propriety and decorum are in particular instilled into their youthful minds with the greatest care, and glimpses of their future destiny communicated to them. All this information is given orally; but it is repeated so often that no part of it fails to make a lasting impression on the mind; and thus the girl learns everything that the mother knows, both singing, as it were, the same old song.

The sports and pastimes of girls are as dissimilar to those of boys as is their intellectual training. Now and then, indeed, they are found indulging in amusements common to both sexes. Swift as so many Atalantas, girls are occasionally seen chasing each other, oftener still, playing hide-and-seek with bandaged eyes, and with as much eagerness as boys. But these impetuous diversions are not legitimately their own. Those that belong to them especially are of a more sedentary character, and are also more ingenious; and their toys—for the most part representing men, women, and children—engross all their attention. The boys—mischievous as they are in all parts of the world, and naturally prone to play pranks—get out of the nursery as soon as they are allowed the freedom. But the girls are ever fond of nestling under the mother's wings at home; and, like their education, their amusements also are of an indoor character. They are not wanting in the playful gaiety of childhood, but there is not much active energy in them, and no self-reliance. The daughter's elbow leans ever on the mother's breast. Mothers necessarily retain over their daughters the greatest authority—much greater than what they retain over their sons.

Bodily exercises for female children there are none. Even the exercises of Hindu boys are tame as compared with the gymnastics of other nations; and as for women, they have no active exercises at all. But they are early taught to be useful, that in their husband's family they may not be jeered at as unprofitable bargains; and the exertions thus called forth answer the purposes of health

sufficiently well. Dancing, riding, and singing are objected to as improper accomplishments; but sweeping the house, cleaning the utensils of the family, and even assisting at cookery, are taught them as a part of the necessary training for fulfilling the duties they are bound to; and the healthiness of the employments makes ample amends for their meanness. In the *Rámáyana* we read that Sitá, though the daughter of a king, swept the house; in doing which, she was accustomed to lift with one hand the bow that Janaka had received from Siva, which made the king determine not to give away his daughter to any one who could not bend the bow. This is precisely the case to this moment; and the labour thus imposed preserves the children from becoming entirely useless and indolent, and gives full exercise even to the strongest, improving both appearance and health. Pale cheeks and a languid aspect are rare among women in India, while active habits and alertness of mind are quite common with them. Clean-limbed and agile, a girl of ten years may be seen daily discharging duties without fatigue which would almost require a labourer to get through; and there is no doubt that the discharge of these callings goes far to accomplish those ends which are elsewhere sought to be secured by backboards and dancing.

In India every member of society marries. The marriage state is considered essential, as well to one's personal usefulness as to the welfare of the community. Nothing is more urgent in a young man than to seek out a wife; and celibacy is considered so disreputable that it is almost unknown. As for women, they must marry. It is a disgrace if one cannot find a husband—not only to herself, but to her family. Daughters growing old under the paternal roof are nowhere to be seen, except among the Kulin Bráhmans, who have not the same facilities of marrying them away as the rest of the community. To be subservient to the wants and pleasures of men is recognised as the only aim and end of female existence. Women can have no aspirations beyond conjugal happi-

ness: and it is believed impossible that a virgin state can be one of innocence. Solicitude is therefore early felt for the marriage of girls, and arrangements are made about it at a time when in other countries parents barely think of putting them to school.

As in Homer we read Achilles declaring that his father Peleus would mate him with a bride, so in India the marriage of children is left entirely with their parents, and when parents are dead, with grandfathers, brothers, or guardians, the parties to be united having no vote in the matter. The business part of the affair is generally conducted by professional matchmakers, who are well versed in Hindu genealogy, and are often intrusted with the whole work, from carrying the first proposals of the unicn to arranging the final adjustment of the marriage settlements, parents concerning themselves only with the more delicate duty of picking and choosing. Formerly these matchmakers were men; but of late women have embraced the profession, and from the privilege they enjoy of having access to the *zenáná* they are, for the most part, more successful in their business than their male competitors. As to selecting and rejecting, parents generally discharge the duty conscientiously enough, and it were uncharitable to suspect otherwise. We are firmly persuaded that the considerations usually weighed and resolved by them are those best calculated to insure the growth of connubial happiness and love; and, in point of fact, there is undoubtedly quite as large a proportion of well-matched couples in India as anywhere else. In Europe, the husband and wife study each other's temper, inclinations, and turn of mind before they are married; this gives the parties a freedom of choice. But, alas for such freedom! Lovers' eyes are proverbially blind. They see not objects in their real light. They marry, and marriage dissipates the false brilliancy that had dazzled their discretion. Too much of good had been seen before, but reality now disappoints expectation, and the disappointment is great. For lovers to choose is, therefore, but a fallacious privilege; and to it,

we fear, is to be attributed the extensive unhappiness resulting from European marriages. To mitigate the evil, Dr. Johnson suggested that all marriages should be made by the lord-chancellor, upon the only considerations of character and circumstances. This is exactly the course followed in India, where the lord-chancellors of families are intrusted with the matter, with absolute and final powers. Much time and trouble are saved by the process, and all the advantages foreseen by the learned doctor are secured. There is no elopement, no throwing away one's self on a dolt or a villain, no losing of hearts for a plume or a ribbon, no paying—as Lady Blessington so caustically observes—for a month of honey with a life full of vinegar. The parents choose, and not the children; and, being free from the heat and folly of youth, they generally choose well. At all events, all women, homely or handsome, are provided for. An English maiden, versed in literature and the arts, often does not get a market at all; but the most ignorant Hindu girl never has to wait beyond her time. And as for love, 'Marry first, and love will come after,' is the motto, and, to the best of our belief, it does come after in most cases. No two persons connected by the ties of ordinary friendship can live constantly together for many years without feeling for each other more kindliness than they commenced with; and when two of different sexes do so, the result must be stronger while alike.

As to the observation of the Abbé Dubois, that to marry or to buy a wife are synonymous in India, we can only say that he should have known better if he meant that as a general remark. Undoubtedly cases do occur in which there is great inequality of age between the parties connected together, or in which, except the wealth of the husband's family, there is no other consideration to prefer him. But in what part of the world does this not happen? Generally, the character and qualifications of the bridegroom are examined with particular care, on one side, and also the state of his health and his prospects in life; and the beauty, address, manners, and disposition of the bride are

as particularly inquired after on the other—these being her chief accomplishments in a country where she is withheld from knowledge. In some cases the increase of family distinction and worldly importance is also consulted on both sides. What then? How does that reflect against the arrangement so long as the primary considerations referred to are not neglected? Money matters are perhaps in many cases largely discussed; but that is a good custom. In this age of practical living, people cannot live on air; and it is desirable that inquiries should be made before marriage whether the man marrying has a house to keep his wife in, and means to feed her. The abbé says that he has never seen two Hindu marriages that really united the hearts of the parties closely. No, not at the time surely, for then they are children; but we shall undertake to cite three instances of happy matches among the Hindus for every two any person, in support of the abbé's assertion, will point out to us among Europeans. We are prepared to admit that Hindu husbands do frequently prove heartless truants; but certainly not more so than husbands in England, France, and Germany. Husbands closely united to their wives are scarce, we fear, all over the world, even for all the love-passages that precede marriage in many countries.

The real evil in Hindu marriages consists rather in the sufferance of polygamy. According to the more ancient practice of the country, a second wife was only taken when the first had been found barren or had proved frail. But, in imitation of the Mahomedans, a plurality of wives has since been regarded by the Hindus rather as a luxury for all who can afford it, than as a provision only for the few whose first wives were ill-chosen. Like all luxuries, however, it is far from being really enviable. A man must have an extraordinary share of patience indeed, to be able to live with more than one wife in peace. The poor never think of it. Though the wish for children is, for obvious reasons, stronger with them than with rich people, they cheerfully stick to their barren consorts in preference to

embarking on an adventure so pregnant with troubles. One only class there is in Hindu society that systematically keeps up the practice, and to it it is a source of gain. In ordinary cases it is the husband that furnishes food and raiment to his wife, and shields her from distress; but in the extraordinary cases to which we refer the rule is reversed. The Kulin Bráhmans are regular diners-out, and to find lodging and entertainment wherever they go, and feed all the year round at the expense of others, they marry as many wives as they can get, and on account of the supposed sanctity of their order get as many as they will take. This freedom to do evil is of recent acquisition. There was a time when a Bráhman could marry his daughter as he liked, and so long as it was a Bráhman she was married to, there was nothing to say against the union. But now times are changed. Since the days of Bullál Sen, of Gour, the Bráhmans have been divided into sections, and, marriages being regulated accordingly, the range of selection has become circumscribed, which causes the difficulty of getting good matches without prejudice to the genealogy of their respective classes.

Of the nuptial ceremonies it cannot be necessary to speak in detail. The Hindus consider them to be very significant and interesting, but in reality the rites are, for the most part, eminently childish, and none of them impresses any deep sense of the sacred engagements that are confirmed. The marriage processions, it is well known, are very sumptuous, even when the parties united are poor; but what follows is altogether very inane and uninstructive. The bride's first introduction into her husband's family is a more characteristic event, and worthy to be mentioned on that account. On the return of the bridegroom with his wife, all the members of the house—men, women, and children—turn out in a delirium of joy to receive them, and some puerile rites and observances over, the seniors give them presents and their benedictions, and all by turns uncover the face of the stranger, the men of

the family now gazing on it for the first time and the last. This over, seclusion and emptiness follow. Under her husband's roof it is not genteel for a new married wife to be boisterous in the amusements of her age, and, though she is not separated from intercourse with other children of the family, she often finds the abode comfortless, for all the affectionate greetings of sisters-in-law and other playmates. Though she had been repeatedly spoken to on the subject from her childhood, by her mother and other female friends at home, yet, having never practically known it till now, her imprisonment chafes her little mind and makes her weep; and her tears sometimes secure her more liberty, or she is sent back to the house of her parents for the time.

The wife occupies an important position in her husband's household, though she plays but a subordinate part in it to begin with. A young woman generally has no influence, except it be over her husband. She is looked upon as a minor by the rest of the family, even after the law has ceased to regard her as such; but, nevertheless, she has all the external tokens of respect paid to her: and when in time she becomes the mistress of the family, she makes the most important figure in the group, is the prime mover of every great event within the domestic circle, and has the highest and most honourable station in it. Of everything within doors she is the uncontrolled despot. Her voice is final; her order not to be set aside. The servants of the *zenáná* are all under her control; she allots to every one his peculiar task; and the internal regulations of the family are all laid down by her. Even the worst of husbands has a complete confidence in her management, and never interferes with her arrangements; nor could he if he would, unless he could be the housekeeper and the cook himself, which would make him quite as ridiculous as assuming the *sáree* and bangles of his wife: and it is difficult to conceive more affectionate reliance and trust than a good husband feels in the care and superintendence of his wife.

Generally, she does not attain this pre-eminence in her youth; it is not a mere sacrifice at the shrine of beauty. Women are married in India long before their reason and understanding have arrived at maturity, and the wife begins to burst into beauty in her thirteenth or fourteenth year; but her influence over the household at that age is very inconsiderable. A young wife is generally an unimportant member of it. She acquires some consequence when she gives birth to an heir; but even then it is not considered graceful in her to be seen in her husband's company. Her influence over him is not attained till a long time after: but, if attained late, it abides long; and when youth and sprightliness have both worn away, the mistress of the family still retains her full power. The homage she was habituated to receive in the maturity of her womanhood, is never withdrawn from her in her age. Even the most beautiful new importation into the *zenáná* never supersedes in authority, however she may in affection, the first wife when her features are deformed with wrinkles; and the old mother-in-law not only exercises her legitimate power, but is even suffered to tyrannise over the wives of her children, long after the death of her husband and the decay of her wisdom.

But this patriarchal pre-eminence within the domestic circle is not always an easy burthen. In itself, it is very vexatious; and the absence of a cultivated mind depriving the Hindu wife of one great source of serenity, makes it much more annoying than it would otherwise probably have been. The title of a housewife, however, is a distinction too highly coveted by her to grudge any labour to deserve it; and, however unpleasant the work may be, she always does her best to discharge it. At times, indeed, the reponsibility presses too heavily on her, and she feels that she is more grievously freighted than she can bear; but she, nevertheless, always goes through her toil with hearty goodwill. The domestic work in India includes the charge of children, which Hindu mothers do not consider to be sufficiently performed by placing them in the custody of nurses.

In fact, the fashion of keeping nurses after the European model can hardly be said to have yet entered the *zenáná;* and the nursery is not only superintended but almost exclusively managed by the mother, even in the richest families. Of course the children are suckled by her, for she cannot endure that another woman should have even a pretext to dispute the quality of mother with her, and many doubt if the character and temperament of the nurse are not imbibed with her milk by the child. Her animal love for her children is so great, that we were almost about to say it compensates, if that could be, for her intellectual insufficiency to model the growth of the ductile mind. If maternal tuition be nonsense, we must not attribute that to indifference, but to ignorance, for nowhere is maternal love more strong, or maternal care more assiduous, than in India.

St. Paul tells us that to guide the house is the chief duty of a married woman; and we doubt if in any part of the world the apostle's injunction is more strictly observed than in India. Nay, we fear that Hindu women push compliance with the requisition to an extreme extent, neglecting if not injuring themselves in guiding the house, degrading themselves to drudges in their anxiety to be good housewives. They rise early in the morning, long before the sun, and yet their work is never over when he goes down to his rest. The employment of the poorer classes includes the preparation of fuel from cow-dung, fetching water from the rivers and tanks for all domestic purposes, and going to market; and their leisure-hours are employed in spinning cotton, which is certainly not an exemption from labour. It affords many families their means of living, and occupation to all; and is an ample substitute for the arts of knitting and sewing, which are not practised among them. Many females of the lower orders are also to be seen labouring from day to day along and in company with men, in occupations which are unfeminine and toilsome. In the country they are employed in cultivating the fields, and in carrying their produce to

fairs and markets; in towns and cities some may be seen pounding brick-dust, others carrying bricks on their heads where building is going on, others pounding rice. These services require much endurance and labour, and expose those who are thus employed to bad company and temptations.

The rich, of course, have no such work to perform. In the different grades of society, the duties of the female sex in India very considerably differ; more so, certainly, than in countries further advanced in intelligence and refinement. In India a difference in outward circumstances places the rich and the poor in situations very dissimilar, large means doing for some what a general refinement has not yet achieved for all. No rich man's wife is ever employed in fetching water, or in drying cow-dung; even spinning, which in Greece was in primitive ages not disdained by queens and princesses, is not in fashion among those in easy state; and pounding rice and brick-dust are, of course, out of the question. And yet, though spared from servile labour, we are not to conclude that they are exempted from active exertion. The minor details of family management, which fall to the lot of all women—high or low—give them much to do; and, in those families where the women are few in number, and where the operations of the kitchen have not yet been transferred to servants, they may even be said to be oppressive. The men think lightly of them, as all may who are not required to drudge themselves; but we doubt if they would retain such indifference long had they to work instead of their wives. It is notorious that men form the larger share of the unemployed population of India, not women.

A proper discharge of her multifarious duties hardly leaves a Hindu wife any time to waste; and hence idle lives and luxurious habits are rather uncommon within the *zenáná*. The rich, having servants to assist them, have indeed more leisure than the poor; and, being shut out from all intellectual applications and grave studies, their employment is, it must be admitted, sometimes somewhat

frivolous and trifling, and not always in due subordination to domestic usefulness. But this frivolity seldom has opportunities of being long indulged, and rarely settles down into a pernicious failing.

To dress and show Hindu women do allot a portion of their time. The philosopher was right who defined woman to be 'an animal fond of dress.' But the time thus set apart is very short indeed compared with what European ladies devote to the work. The toilette of a Hindu wife is very simple; and her art seldom aspires to improve on nature. As she neither expects compliments nor admirers, not to appear slovenly is her only ambition. She combs her hair and adorns her person: what woman does not? In India long hair is highly esteemed; in the language of the Scriptures, 'if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her;' and cutting off the hair is a disgrace and a punishment for incorrect behaviour. The wife naturally takes a delight in braïding her dark tresses; but powders and pomatums are unknown, and she studiously avoids ringlets and curls. The body also receives some attention, but does not require much, being naturally very smooth and glossy. Hindu women wear no stays, and they do not paint their cheeks or their eyebrows. Rouge is unknown, and the *soormá* is not used by respectable females. Painting the feet red is the only painting of the person in fashion in respectable circles. Nor do they usually load themselves with ornaments, as has been asserted by many writers. Except on occasions of festivity, when every woman naturally enough vies to outdo others in ostentation and splendour, ornaments are not much worn, though the honour of having many ornaments is generally very much coveted by all, perhaps in some cases from the ulterior motives of securing an independence. For the most part these ornaments are very clumsy, and much too jingling and glittering for grown-up ladies. They might be tolerated in children, but are too flimsy even for women. They are, however, not the less precious for that. Not seldom each fair wearer bears on her graceful neck and arms half her lord's wealth,

sometimes more; and, on festive occasions, when many such are met together, it may be mentioned, without much exaggeration, that an emperor's ransom is displayed among them.

The raiment of Hindu women consists of one entire piece of cloth, uncut and unsewed, which is wound round the body in a manner so as to cover the whole of it, including the head. Though much more convenient than the dress of European ladies, and far better adapted to the climate, and to the menial service they have to perform, we cannot help condemning it on the score of decency, as it hardly conceals the symmetry of the body, and, where thin muslins are in fashion, scarcely serves as a covering at all. If intermixture with society had been permitted to the women, we are certain that this dress would not have survived long, for no man would have agreed to his wife, clothed according to the fashion now prevalent in the *zenáná*, appearing in public among strangers; nor would the women, who have generally a nice and accurate sense of propriety, have adhered to it even if he had allowed them. In those provinces where women have more liberty than in Bengal, the *pyjámá* and the *pyráhán* of the Mahomedans have long displaced the Hindu *sáree;* and the *peishwáz* also, most nearly resembling the robe of Englishwomen, has come into use among certain classes, though it has not been generally adopted by all. The improvement in Bengal as yet has been less considerable. Such as it is, it is for the most part confined to the Bráhmo ladies, who wear *jámás* or shirts, and short trousers under their *sárees.* But the other classes have not accepted these refinements to any great extent, and the simple robe of a bygone age continues, the modesty of the women contrasting strangely with their often semi-transparent drapery. Nor do Hindu women wear any sort of shoes, slippers, or sandals to protect their feet. If the laws of India did not insist on seclusion from the outset, as some have held, still seclusion has been the fashion among the rich from the earliest times, and hence there has been no improvement for ages in dress.

The conversation of Hindu women is for the most part inane and frivolous, which affords a correct proof of the emptiness of their minds. Men in the country never converse with women on subjects of importance. The husband, when talking to his wife, carefully avoids every discourse that might require the exercise of reason. He discusses with her domestic matters only, such as about the merits of the cookery, or the cleanliness of the house, or her ornaments, or her dress. But every question that requires a cultivated mind to appreciate he carefully and habitually eschews. A supine vacuity of thought is the necessary result. Petty anecdotes of the neighbourhood, local gossip, scandal--the idler's theme all over the world—are what women for the most part interchange with each other. In their absence, nonsense supplies them a never-failing stock, always welcome, because never requiring effort or the exercise of intelligence. And every to-morrow is a repetition of to-day.

Of exclusive indoor amusements Hindu women have but few. For girls there are plenty of diversions, but those for grown-up girls are scarce; and when they have no household drudgery to perform—as happens frequently with the ladies of rich families, and likewise with all in those families where there are many widows to divide the domestic toil between them—time hangs heavy on their hands, and they are obliged to create enjoyments to diversify the listlessness of their lives. The prejudices of the country, however, do not exclude them from witnessing in secrecy the public amusements held at the time of the great festivals in the houses of all who can afford them. These, indeed, are often of a character more deserving to be reprobated and condemned than honoured with the presence, screened though it be, of women. Many of the amusements are indelicate, and are utterly unfit to be witnessed by them; but, so long as they are screened, the tone and sentiment of society prevent them not from doing so. The most considerate parent sees no risk in suffering his daughter to prostitute her ears by hearing what she

ought not to listen to; the most jealous husband thinks not of recalling his wife from an entertainment which insults her ears with language and sentiments of a tendency undisguisedly pernicious. That there is much of mirth, wit, or pathos in these revelries we will not be bold enough to assert. But that there is not a small tincture of indelicacy in them is a truth which none who has known them will deny.

Against the other indoor amusements of India we have nothing to advance, except that they are frivolous, and are often pursued to excess—especially the playing at cards and similar diversions—by those women of rich families who have not much work to perform. An excessive fondness for such pastimes soon degenerates into a habit, and then, wherein does it differ from gambling? Of late, carpet-work has come into fashion with the *dilettante*, and is very much prized; and, besides it, there are superstitious rites and ceremonies to perform which take up much time. These observances are, for the most part, very puerile, and have for their object the future happiness of the performer. Some of them promise to render a woman a mother, and not a few are intended to propitiate the blessings of heaven on her husband and her children. For unmarried girls also there are rites to perform whereby to secure comely and indulgent husbands; but there are none for widows, who are only not excluded from making gifts to Bráhmans.

# CHAPTER XVI.

## HINDU WOMEN; THEIR CONDITION AND CHARACTER.

### PART II.

THE social restraints over the female sex in India appear to have been very anciently forged: they are at all events not of recent manufacture, as some authorities would make out. In the house of a Hindu the apartments of women were always distinct from those set aside for men; and they were never easily accessible to strangers, the door never communicating directly with the street. We also read that it was always a part of the moral breeding of a woman not to converse with any but her kinsmen; even lovers talked by proxy: and to live retired in the seclusion of her apartment was always regarded as a virtue. It is quite true that these rules were not very rigidly enforced before the time of the Mahomedans; but they existed, and their existence implies that a free intercourse with men was not the fashion at any time. The barbarities perpetrated by the Mahomedans enforced the rivets now worn by the women; but they were ready to be put on from a long anterior date.

At this moment all Hindu dwellings, great and small, are invariably divided into two sets of apartments, one for the men, and the other for the women, the latter being for the most part much less convenient than the other, particularly in respect to air and light. The distinguishing features of the female apartments are small grated windows and lofty walls, and their not being approachable except

through a labyrinth. This is sacred ground. Within this retirement, and entirely separated from the men, live the females of India. They never come out into the male quarters, nor ever leave their own, except when invited to the houses of relations on festive or other occasions, when they proceed thither in close-covered *pálkis*, lest they should be seen by strangers. They have, therefore, never any opportunity to satisfy the natural curiosity to look about them, beyond what the sliding-doors of the *pálki* slightly parted afford on such occasions; and the knowledge of men and things gleaned by these casual peepings into the streets furnish many a subject of earnest discussion in the *zenáná* for months, so ignorant are its inmates of the world. In the metropolitan cities the use of carriages by females has now become frequent, and everywhere the railways are largely availed of; but, as a rule, seclusion is still the order of the day, and it is all the more rigid in proportion to respectability and wealth.

Nor are the women debarred only from intercourse with strangers; they cannot freely associate even with all the men of the family. Walls shut them out from the world; the rules of propriety again shut them out from many whom walls do not exclude from their ken and knowledge. From every person of superior rank in the family they turn aside their faces and cover them; and this is as well a mark of respect as of modesty. The wife cannot even accost her own husband in the presence of others, nor he notice her. A man makes himself ridiculous if he speaks to his wife affectionately before a third person; and the wife is considered shameless who responds to such familiarity. Custom and strange ideas of propriety require them to feign a coldness and reserve which in reality of course do not exist. Nay, young married people cannot even see each other as often as they might wish to do so. They are only brought together at night, and parted again in the morning, as if their union were altogether a clandestine one. The only male relatives in her husband's family whom the Hindu wife can notice openly and at all times are her husband's

younger brothers, and all children. Intimacy with any other is infallibly set down as criminal, and platonic attachments are neither formed nor understood.

From moving in society Hindu women are, as a body, especially interdicted; and this interdiction is an indiscriminatingly strict one. Even with the friends of the family they are forbidden to communicate; nay, it is held indelicate on the part of those friends to inquire about them, except in general terms. In all but the nearest relatives it is an affront to ask about the health of the members of the *zenáná.* 'Are *all* of the house well?' is the utmost an old friend can venture to inquire, and from any but a very old friend even this question would sound strange. Customs so rigid are scarcely defensible; but we decidedly approve that Hindu women are regular 'keepers at home,' for to them that is the gorgon-shield of Pallas, to change foes into stone. Under the present state of Hindu society female delicacy and reserve could not but suffer by outdoor excursions. No woman in any country was ever rendered a better wife or mother from gadding habits, and those who are suffered to wander about from house to house, in India—a liberty which many widows enjoy—do not by their conduct advance much the cause of such freedom. They are, in the words of the Bible, 'not only idle, but tattlers also, and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not;' and they wander hither and thither only to foment many an unnecessary quarrel by their uncalled-for interference.

The women of the lower classes are not secluded. They, like individuals of their station in other countries, go abroad when and where they please, and are veiled or unveiled as suits their own wishes; and they mix in all the busy scenes of life, pursuing almost every species of labour and employment promiscuously with men. In large numbers they attend all the public festivals, often forming by far the greater portion of the throng; and they go to visit idols at distant shrines, executing their journeys in company with men. They are also to be seen every morning,

throughout the year, performing their ablutions in the sacred streams publicly and promiscuously with men; and in these ablutions the widows of the upper classes take part, though they endeavour to keep themselves distinct from the lower classes as much as is practicable. This river-bathing by females is one of the most objectionable customs that we know of, and we are not a little surprised to see the sensitive Hindu look upon it with indifference. The female bathers of the upper classes never enter into mutual communication with the men; any effort to draw them into conversation would be regarded and resented as an insult; they cannot even be saluted, or any notice taken of them, without a breach of ordinary politeness. The lustrations are at the same time performed with great modesty, the women bathing completely dressed, and never looking about them in any direction. For all that, however, coming out of the river in wet drapery, which, adhering to the body closely, gives to it all the appearance of perfect nakedness, savours too much of indelicacy for us not to notice it; and the changing of garments also, though performed with the greatest address, often exposes the body beyond what even the rules of Indian decorum would justify.

In all countries marriage draws a broad line of demarcation separating the female sex into two classes; but in India that line is lost in the one laid down by nature to part off grown-up girls from mere children. Widowhood marks a wider line of discrimination in the country, dividing the mass of the sex into two classes having duties and trials of very dissimilar character. It is therefore necessary to examine the widow's life and responsibility apart from the condition of married women.

Bad as the lot of the married woman in India may be, it is the happiest condition that can befall her, and is always reckoned in the light of a reward for virtue. The women themselves admit no blessedness to be greater than dying in the married state. The very name of widow is a reproach; and when women quarrel with one another, and

when their mutual hatred becomes deadly, they can conceive no greater abuse than wishing each other to survive their husbands. Widows, however young, are excluded from all scenes of gaiety and all ceremonies of rejoicing. Their appearance at marriages is never solicited, and, where on account of their near relationship they do appear, they are not permitted to take any active part in the rites and ceremonies connected with them. They are not allowed to wear ornaments. Immediately after the death of her husband the wife strips off all her jewels and renounces them for ever, often selling them at once and converting the property into cash. Nor are widows permitted to dress themselves in coloured clothing, or in any robe which is not absolutely white. Every emblem or privilege of matrimony is at once withdrawn from them; to appear slovenly becomes meritorious; and they are bound to keep frequent fasts, that the cravings of the flesh might be subdued. From these fasts neither age nor infirmity can exempt them—nay, not even illness, except when it is very serious. 'Let the widow emaciate her body by living on roots, fruits, and flowers,' says Menu; 'let her not even pronounce the name of another man after her lord is deceased; let her continue till death forgiving injuries, performing harsh duties, avoiding sensual pleasures, and practising virtue.' All this is actually done, or attempted to be done, with the greatest self-denial. The law has sanctioned the remarriage of widows, but very few of the sufferers have availed themselves of the privilege, in most cases because it grates against their ideas of modesty.

The number of widows among the Hindus is very great. In many families the widows considerably outnumber the married women. As old widowers are constantly remarrying, and as the girls they marry seldom exceed the tender age of ten, the cause of this is certainly not difficult to understand. An old husband of fifty has but small chance of surviving a girl of ten or eleven years; and among Kulin Bráhmans one such Methuselah has often a plentiful harvest of little wives. Hence, not unfrequently,

girls find themselves in the most miserable condition before they have become women, and even such are most averse to remarry. The prejudices of the country do not permit the idea being entertained, though the law has sanctioned it; and the misery within the family circle is necessarily great.

In those families in which widows abound, the labour of female domestic servants is almost entirely dispensed with. The idea of employing widows so as to make their labour cover the cost of their maintenance naturally suggests itself to those who are burdened with their charge. Except in rich families, where their *stridhun*, or inalienable personal property, often amounts to a little independence, continual work is invariably exacted from them. They draw water from the wells, or seek it at a distance from tanks and rivers, cook the family dinners, and sweep the house clean; and in such families married women are, for the most part, free from severe toil and servitude. But it often happens that a widow burdens her relatives not only with herself, but with a numerous offspring. Young wives become young mothers, and at the age of twenty there are often four or five children to support. However much the widow might wish to evince her gratitude by toil, it is not in her power, when so weighted, to devote herself entirely to the family drudgery.

Domestic irregularity cannot altogether fail in a country where the number of widows is so great, and where the youths generally are not well trained. But, as the Abbé Dubois observes, Hindu women are 'naturally chaste;' and it is, we believe, to this circumstance that we should attribute the fact that the violation of honour is much rarer among them than, from the state of the case, might be inferred. Notwithstanding that even young widows do not, as a rule, remarry, the disorders engendered by their abstinence are far from being frequent. Perhaps the severity of their condition, the weakening influence of their diet, the reserve in which they are brought up, their great distance from the contagion of evil examples, their entire

seclusion from men except of the family, and the vigilance and attention with which their behaviour is constantly watched, smother that propensity for indulgence so natural to the animal frame. Be that as it may, though the causes are inexplicable, the fact is not to be gainsaid, and we dwell upon it particularly because many ill-informed writers have unsparingly traduced the Hindu female character, and an ill-judging public has accepted their philippics in preference to the less startling testimony of truth.

When we say that depravity of life is uncommon among Hindu widows, we of course mean to assert that among married women it is yet more scarce. A faithful wife, in the extravagant language of the Shástras, is enjoined to look with disdain even on the most beautiful among the gods, as contrasted with her wedded lord; and, verily, for the most part, conjugal attachment on the side of the wife is as exemplary in India as the text requires it. Though their religion does not and cannot teach them the full enormity of the crime, still the lines of severance between the sexes are so rigidly drawn, and the infamy and shame which attach to an erring wife are so great, that they are quite sufficient by themselves to preserve Hindu women in the path of rectitude. That transgressions against chastity nevertheless do occur, it would be absurd to deny. Where married women are concerned it chiefly happens in the families of Kulin Bráhmans, whose wives are often married only in name, or visited at distant intervals of time, which necessarily induces them to dishonour their beds. 'A wife is a benefice obliging to residence,' as the clergyman's lady so correctly held it; and of course, wives in all countries entertain the same notions of their privileges. If walls and strict customs protect them from temptations in some countries, they are not to be regarded as impregnable barricades. As a rule, however, the lapse from virtue in India is more frequent among widows than among married women, principally because the former are exposed to greater temptation. Destitution, also, leads many of them astray, who, having nobody to shield them, and

being under the necessity of seeking a livelihood, often do so at the expense of virtue; and the impossibility of concealing the consequences of their frailty many times plunges them in greater crimes in attempting to conceal the less.

Altogether the condition of women in India is not a very enviable one. If widows are immersed in a lower deep than married women, it does not follow that the depth occupied by the latter is not great. There are grades in the disesteem in which the different sections of the sex are held, but the whole body participate in the slight; not one is altogether exempted from it. A thousand little incidents prove this. Much stress has been laid by certain writers on the fact of wives not joining their husbands at dinner. But that may be explained away as a mere matter of etiquette, which differs considerably in different countries, and of which different notions are entertained by different individuals; and there may be some other criteria honoured by general acceptance among Europeans which are equally inconclusive. But the circumstances proving the slight are many. The excellence of woman, unmarried, married, or widowed, throughout the country—among great and small—is rated only by the scale of servile fear and capacity for endurance and toil. The best wife is she who, with superior diligence, endures all the hardship of servants, and the best of daughters she who perseveringly learns all the mysteries of pickling and preserving, cooking and boiling, which comprise the measure of female perfection. Then again, a man acting in an improper manner is twitted as a woman, and a husband influenced by the advice of his wife is held in much greater scorn than usually falls to the lot of henpecked husbands in other parts of the world. The respective position of the sexes is also very invidiously defined in all the written records of the land. Women have no ways pointed out to them by which to distinguish themselves, or to rise to eminence; the never-ceasing occupations allotted to them being the ministering, daily and hourly, to the comfort of husbands and children—duties

of very great importance, doubtless, and very delightful to all well-regulated minds, but quite disproportionate to their intellectual and moral calibre, to exercise which fully no adequate provision is made. To a woman her husband is her god on earth, and strict unmurmuring obedience is the worship she is enjoined to offer him. However infirm or offensive he may be, whether a fool or a rake, a drunkard or a knave, her inferiority changes not its character according to the variations of the case. If her husband laugh, she must laugh; if her husband weep, she must weep; when he speaks to her she shall answer to please him, and when he speaks not she shall keep her eyes fixed on her master and be ready to receive his commands. In everything she does her only aim must be to delight him; and if he speaks to her in a passion, or even beats her unjustly, she must receive the punishment without a murmur, and entreat his forgiveness. To retort on him for an abuse or a blow, or even to feel angry or be sullen for either, is exceedingly heinous; nor has she the privilege of complaining against him left to her.

But are all such requirements of the Shástras actually conceded by the women? Yes, indeed, they are. Every tyranny is unmurmuringly borne by them, perhaps because they cannot help it. 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands as unto the Lord,' is a Christian precept; but the submission of a Hindu wife is of all others its best illustration, except that the illustration in the case pushes to an extreme even beyond the impressive direction. The obedience enjoined by the Apostle is not unlimited obedience; that conceded by the Hindu wife is. She has not the liberty to note where obedience ceases to be a duty. Is it then an unwilling submission that the Hindu wife renders to her lord? No. Habit has now made that natural which at first was, and must have been, constrained. Servile homage, she has been taught, is her duty, and she renders it with cheerfulness. Perhaps one of the causes of this unmurmuring obsequiousness is to be traced in the circumstances of her condition. Her husband is her only

prop in the world; she is attached to him for life or death; none other of her relatives can ever make up his loss; the severest of husbands is better than none at all; the marriage state always preferable to widowhood. This greatly contributes to make the Hindu wife smile so sweetly under her burthen.

All her devotion to her husband, however, does not always soften down his severity. The disposition to oppress is inherent in human nature, and where society is in a degraded state it never fails to manifest itself. Besides her personal charms, woman has nothing with which to counteract this spirit of tyranny, nothing where civilisation and intellectual progress have not elevated her above its influence. In India, the strides of progress have been tardy, and in all the ties of life—conjugal, filial, and paternal—woman is frequently more or less oppressed. When the fathers, husbands, and sons happen to be above the general run of the community, the condition of the sex fails not to be more than ordinarily happy. But such cases are comparatively few: the misery of the mass seldom receives much sympathy.

And how does woman repay this strictness? We have said she is unmurmuringly submissive to her lord; we shall add that she is devotedly affectionate to him.

> 'Her faith is fixed and cannot move,
> She darkly feels him great and wise,
> She dwells on him with faithful eyes,
> "I cannot understand: I love."'

Those who have witnessed the expression of a widow's grief, those who have observed the extent of her violent sorrow, must know this well. There are authors indeed, who, unable to appreciate the character of these mournful demonstrations, have imputed them to affectation and grimace, not sorrow, forgetting that 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' But there is a nationality in everything which strangers may never appreciate. Europeans find fault with the heartrending

lamentations of the Hindu widow as exceeding what real affection would urge to, and the Hindus consider the European mourning for the dead, with all its sable pageantry, as much too insufficient a regret for the loved and the true. Here both judgments are alike in error. When we remember that the death of her husband is to the Hindu widow the commencement of a long, unending chain of afflictions, we should pause ere we accuse her of hypocrisy in her wailings and lamentation for the loss.

There was a time when the Hindu widow gave more decided, though more barbarous, proofs of the strength of her attachment, when, holding all the world in low esteem, and anxious to partake with her deceased lord the enjoyments of the blessed, she suffered herself to be burnt alive with him rather than survive him. The comfortless condition of her after-life, the vanity of winning high renown, the almost coercive supplications of relatives and friends, no doubt had their influence in conducing to this. But they err who conclude that Hindu women only made a virtue of necessity on all such occasions, for we have the clearest details of many cases where conjugal affection was the sole motive for the sacrifice. Nor is India the only country where the practice has been in force. Herodotus and others mention that it was known among several ancient nations in very early times, and that among many wives disputes often arose for the honour of dying with their lord. We are not to be understood as advocating the Suttee. Even where the immolation was not an act of murder on the part of those who induced or forced the bereaved wife to the sacrifice, even where it was a voluntary renunciation of existence at the shrine of love, we cannot find for it a better name than suicide. But surely, surely, the burning of the living with the dead was an undeniable proof of strong connubial attachment. The reflection of Elphinstone on the subject is very apposite and beautiful. 'One is humiliated to think,' says he, 'that so feeble a being as woman can be elevated by superstition to a self-devotion not surpassed by the noblest examples

of patriots and martyrs.' But it was not superstition that only, or mainly, elevated her: in no country has the love of the Hindu woman for her husband ever been equalled.

Nor does that one affection entirely absorb the feelings of her heart. Her attachment for her children is also proverbially inordinate, though, she being unskilled in letters and untrained for discipline, her partiality for them is often productive of much evil. Not well understanding in what consists the welfare of her child, and being yet anxious to promote its happiness, the mother often materially interferes with its proper training, and fondles it when it should be chastised; but the affection, though many times injurious, is not the less true. 'A wife and a mother,' said the pious Francesca Romana, 'when called upon, must quit her God at the altar, and find Him in her household affairs;' and woman in India practises according to that beautiful motto every day of her life.

Her love for the family generally is also far from being lukewarm. Native families are, for the most part, very fond of living together, and many of our readers have no idea of what affection generally exists between all parties thus residing in one house, and what privations they endure to comfort and please each other. The women, to whom everything sweet and beautiful naturally belongs, are of course at the bottom of this harmony. Where they are indifferent, there no harmony exists. In the chambers of sickness and pain likewise, in the midst of anxiety, sorrow, and disappointment, the Hindu wife, sister, and daughter is—what woman is in all parts of the world—a ministering angel. The laborious care and tenderness with which she attends and watches over her sick relatives has never been surpassed; and the tears of sympathy she sheds over their sufferings are always as sincere as they are copious. Her heart is ever overflowing with the tenderest affections; and there are no personal privations, no self-devotion which she will not unmurmuringly put up with to alleviate misery. From wealth to penury she will descend and complain not, from splendour to disgrace she

will slide down with an unruffled brow. Even towards strangers the kindliness of her conduct stretches forth its influence, often without reference to the prejudices of caste, and always in pleasing contrast with the sullen apathy of the men.

Women in India are affectionate. We cannot say that the men are so to the same extent. 'Husbands, love your wives,' is a text not in such general acceptance as is that which teaches wives to submit unto their husbands. A husband in India is said to love his wife when he is not scandalously and notoriously addicted to incontinence; that match is pronounced to be excellent where the husband is not unkind. Of many wives the life is much more unpleasant; and among great people it is not uncommon for husband and wife to live altogether asunder, though on the same premises, and on the part of the husband in perfect unconcern. If assumed coldness be common to all Hindu lovers, real coldness in these cases amounts almost to positive harshness: and yet all this repulsion has no defence. The husband is not indifferent because he thinks his wife has misbehaved. He knows her to be true, fond, and affectionate; but the nature of his amusements will not allow him to return her love. He is indifferent to her that he may have better opportunities of gambling away his hours, or of pleasing a mistress. Perhaps the education of women may improve this state of affairs. It should enable the wife to render home more agreeable, and give to her native charms an additional beauty. Where she is slighted only for her simple heart, it may even serve to prop up her influence. But we are not very sanguine that such will be the inevitable result, for the corruption of habits among the rich at this moment is very great. The experiment, however, deserves to be tried, since it may improve the husbands as well as their wives.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### HINDU FEMALE EDUCATION.

THE education of Hindu women has been much talked of since the British conquest of India, or rather since Young India has been recognised and has acquired a right to be heard. But no great advance in the matter has yet been made, though the way for such advance has been cleared, and the commencement of active operations inaugurated. It took a long time to convince the people generally that to educate their females was a good thing and ought to be attempted; and it is doubtful if even now this fundamental truth is fully admitted. But the educated portion of the community have become anxious to obtain educated wives, and that in itself is a great way gained.

We have shown in the preceding two chapters what the actual position of woman in India is. The great problem now before us is to improve it, if we can. Hinduism, *pure et simple,* does not give woman a distinct status or responsibility in life. 'For woman are no separate holy rites, fasts, and ceremonies,' says Menu; 'all she has to do is to worship her husband, and thus will she become famous in heaven.' The law regards her only as a satellite to man, and condemns her to a perpetual state of pupilage and dependence. 'Whether a female be a child, or a young woman, or old, she must ever be dependent,' says the law-giver quoted. 'In her childhood she must be in subjection to her parents, in her youth to her husband, in her old age to her children.' Thus bound hand and foot in slavery,

how was she to be emancipated? The female who can read and write is branded as the heir of misfortunes. The *Veds* are not even to be heard by women. 'Women,' says Menu, 'have no business with the texts of the *Veds*;' and from all other sources of information they are as strictly shut out, the study of letters being pronounced to be a disqualification for domestic usefulness and the unavoidable harbinger of danger and distress. There was no way for it, therefore, but to cut the gordian-knot, and the knot has at last been cut through.

'Woman,' say the Gentoo laws, 'is never satisfied with the gratification of her appetites, no more than fire is satisfied with burning fuel, or the main ocean with receiving the rivers.' Menu also says: 'Women are ever ready to corrupt men, whether wise or foolish. Therefore, whether it be a mother, or sister, or daughter, let no man sit with her alone, for the power of lust is great, and even the wise may not withstand it.' In the same strain says the Nit Shástra: 'To lie, to be impudent, to deceive, to speak bitter words, to be unclean and cruel, are all vices inherent in woman's nature; and most of all to find fault with a man if her wishes be not satisfied.' But these abuses were too outrageous to carry weight. Instead of injuring her with her lord and master, they only secured her his sympathy, as he who had possession of her heart had no difficulty in discovering that her character was belied. 'Among good castes,' says the Abbé Dubois, 'the Hindu females in general, and married women in particular, are worthy to be set forth as patterns of chastity and conjugal fidelity to individuals of their sex in more enlightened countries;' and this truth their husbands, in throwing the Shástras overboard, were not slow to discover. The amiable heart and sweet disposition were triumphant; and the husband naturally sought to beautify their possessor yet more by improving her mind. If there were texts in the Shástras vilifying her character and condemning her education, there were others that directly contradicted them, and these were backed by extraordinary instances of cleverness

which the past history of the country presented, which stood out as landmarks to show what the sex was capable of. These precepts and examples, which had both been lost sight of during the long era of Mahomedan thraldom, Young India now came forward to revive, and, over-riding all objections to the contrary, accepted for his guidance the example of Yagnawalká, and deliberately sat down, each to educate his own Maitreyi according to his bent. All the education that has yet been given to women in the country has been mainly achieved in this way. Where the husband undertakes the education of his wife personally he performs the work fully and well.

Education by the school system has been tried simultaneously, but has not answered to the same extent, and for very obvious reasons will not do so for many years to come. There is first the great difficulty of early marriages, which cannot be so easily got over as some people imagine. The climate renders early marriages necessary, and this the community understand so well, that there is no chance of the practice being soon abandoned, for all the agitation it has given rise to. A girl attains her puberty when twelve years old, sometimes even earlier; and the notions of chastity entertained by the people are so peculiar, and their abhorrence of elopements is so great, that they consider marriage before attainment of puberty to be indispensable. The marriage of his daughter is therefore the all-engrossing anxiety of the father during her earlier years, and it overrides any natural wish that he may entertain to see her well educated. If she is placed in school by him, or taught to read at home, it is only a temporary arrangement, to be given up the moment a good match is secured. Up to this time no girl of a respectable family has been continued in school after having been affianced.

Under these circumstances the wife, as a matter of course, comes untaught from her father's house to that of her husband, and it depends entirely on the family arrangements in the latter whether she is able or not to continue in it such studies as she may have commenced. The

father has no further concern with her education; she is transferred body and soul to her husband's family, and it is her husband's business to decide whether she should get on with her studies or abandon them. Even when she does commence to read in her father's house, her progress up to the date of her marriage is necessarily inconsiderable, as the time devoted to it can in no instance exceed three or four years, within which period, besides her books, she has various other things to mind, particularly the instructions of *materfamilias* in regard to cooking and other household duties, which she considers much more important than book-reading.

In her husband's house the wife, far from being able to continue her studies, is often obliged to abandon them altogether, that she might be the better able to perform the manual service that now devolves on her; and if she receives any instruction, it is only from her husband, after her household labours are terminated. In the more opulent families she is of course never an actual drudge, and neither cooks for the household nor sweeps the house clean; but she superintends all the work of the *zenáná*, the details of which are pretty heavy; and a multiplicity of little cares drives out from her mind both her books and their teachings, unless the husband wishes otherwise, and helps her with such instruction as he is able to impart.

This is safe work, but very slow; and hence the various efforts made to introduce public tuition to expedite results. But in these efforts the natives themselves have never heartily co-operated. All such movements have originated with Europeans, and, for the most part, have been unsuccessful, as being unadapted to the country. In alluding to these efforts the name of Miss Cooke, afterwards Mrs. Wilson, can never be forgotten. She started the first female school in Calcuttá, in which the women of the lower classes were educated for conversion to Christianity. But this necessarily confined her operations; and disappointment was also felt that the education attained by the girls was not anything very extraordinary.

At a much later date Mr. Drinkwater Bethune, a legislative member of the Governor-General's Council, established a school which affected to invite the children of the higher classes. But the failure of this was still greater; it never equalled the range of Mrs. Wilson's usefulness, though in time it came to be backed by the *imprimatur* of the Government: and all public schools similarly set up have been more or less failures everywhere, except in Bombay, where the success obtained among all classes has been more encouraging. Throughout all India the total number of schools at this moment scarcely exceeds two thousand, and the total number of school-girls fifty thousand; very insignificant figures certainly for a country that numbers a population of about two hundred millions.

For the higher classes the plan of *zenáná* teaching has been adopted everywhere, and has answered to a considerable extent. Since the mountain would not come to Mahomet, it was wise on the part of Mahomet to go to the mountain and accomplish the miracle; and the *zenáná* missions conducted by female tutors already count a large number of pupils in the metropolitan towns all over the country. But the education conferred in this way is yet very simple and elementary. The movement is only valuable as a right conception rightly carried out; but in reality it has achieved nothing to speak of up to this time, though there is no doubt that eventually it will. One great drawback of the scheme is that anything that disturbs particular family arrangements interferes with it almost as a matter of course, and very often upsets it altogether. The progress thus made is necessarily not very enduring, being easily wiped off and obliterated.

How the women of India should be educated is a very important question, which we should like to see well discussed. We do not think the European model the best to imitate. The education of European females is, as a rule, too flimsy to be of any real value, and, though harmless in its results in the cold climates of the north, would make woman a wild animal beneath the burning sun of

the tropics; and Young India is too wide awake not to understand this. He does not want his wife to dance or sing, or paint, or do the pretty; he does not want her to sputter French or Italian, or English either. He strongly urges that the judgment and the understanding should be well cultivated, and a practical education given to her in place of what are called 'accomplishments.' In India, especially, women are practical creatures, helpmates to people not in very affluent circumstances, having no occasion to move in society, and show themselves or be seen, almost exclusively employed during the greatest portion of the day in the everyday work of life, for which most families cannot afford or find a substitute. This is their unwavering destiny, and it is for this destiny only that they should be primarily trained. Home is their only sphere of usefulness, and they should be educated solely for home, so that they might discharge their domestic duties faithfully. The accomplishments of an English miss will avail Hindu women nothing; carried out to perfection the model is certainly not worth much. 'Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee,' is woman's peculiar lot in the East; and she should be qualified for that condition well. The suitable instruction for Hindu women we would therefore classify in the following order: (1) moral, (2) domestic, (3) literary, (4) ornamental.

We give precedence to a 'moral' education for girls for many reasons, and principally because such education has been much neglected in the training of boys. In the case of the latter it is the intellect only that is well cultivated, without particular reference to morality. This may do well enough for them, though even in their case it has been regarded as an error. But a boy without a moral education is not necessarily a fish out of his element. He may still get on well in life, and be admired, respected, and beloved. Though rude, immoral, or violent, he finds no difficulty in receiving admittance into society, being often prized for other parts. Even after he has fallen irrevocably he is believed and aided when he promises to grow better. But

similar leniency is never extended to the failings of a girl. Even in the most enlightened countries of the world the repentant woman never regains her lost name and rank; and it is certain that she can never do so in India. Man holds her character in higher estimation than his own, and values it accordingly; and hence the greater need for her being educated in holiness. It is for this reason mainly that the Hindus so strongly object to a public-school education for their daughters. It is true that in such schools mere children only are collected and taught; but they contend, and correctly, that even girls of similar ages but of different characters cannot be brought into contact with each other without injury to the tender susceptibilities of those who are purer-minded than the rest. A healthy moral education should therefore be the first object held in view both by the *zenáná* teachers and in the public schools for the poorer classes. At present this is attempted to be secured by the former only, and chiefly by Bible-reading. But Bible-reading to people who have no faith in its teachings certainly does not afford what is required.

We have assigned the next place to 'domestic' instruction, and who will not admit that this is one of the most important requirements of India? It includes not merely housekeeping, thrift, and cookery, but also the elementary principles of hygiene, and, what is yet more important, the training of the heart for the expansion of the domestic virtues and for the endurance of domestic trials. The women of India are now household drudges merely. Educate them so that they may be steady wives and mothers, possessed of a good methodical knowledge of the household work devolving on them, and able at the same time to carry the family through all its straits and difficulties. Man in many professions may dispense with a practical capacity for these duties and responsibilities; but not woman in any. The poet, the artist, and the mathematician may, and do, leave business entirely out of their aim; but, in India at least, it will not do for women to imitate them in that respect. They are household deities

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in every sense of the word, having no sphere of usefulness apart from their homes, and no intellectual elevation, however great, would atone in them for the want of domestic aptitude, affections, and virtues. What is particularly required, therefore, is so to improve their minds that they may be well up to all their domestic responsibilities. The trials and afflictions of life are constant; every household is daily exposed to accidents and dangers. It is the wife especially that must be equal to these emergencies, both with her affections and her virtues. Are the *zenáná* teachers alive to the importance of this matter at present? Does the education they impart seek to be practical in this respect? If not, it will not be of much advantage to those whom they are anxious to benefit.

The third place has been assigned to 'literary' instruction, without which the finest qualities of the heart cannot be usefully exercised. We value literary instruction for many reasons, which we shall enumerate, but especially because it would enable the Hindu mother to be really of service to her children. We do not wish to disqualify her for her domestic duties, nor will education render her unfit for them: even the most mechanical and prosaic duties of life are not really incompatible with a cultivated mind; and the cleverest women are frequently to be seen in every part of the world doing full justice to them. Let the Hindu wife continue to sew, patch, and mend old clothes, if the circumstances of her husband render it necessary that she should do so; let her prepare preserves and condiments, and even cook for the household if the family cannot keep a servant: but, over and above all that, we wish her to be able to supply the mental wants of her children, as she supplies their natural wants, for their making or unmaking is entirely in her hands. All children are still born in Paradise—a paradise as beautiful as that in which Adam lived—and are born with hearts as sinless and pure as were those of our first parents. What converts this Eden into an unweeded garden, but the training which the sinful communicate to the sinless? For the

first five or six years the child is entirely dependent on the mother; and we are anxious that that five years' influence be properly and fully utilized. Nature has provided the mother with patience, gentleness, and love; no mother in any part of the world has been more beneficently endowed in these respects than the Hindu mother. Educate her to this extent at least, that she may be able fully to discharge her duties to those who are wholly dependent on her influence. We do not want her to be as well educated as man. We hold her sphere of life to be distinct from his, and we do not want her to run the race with him, and render herself preposterous and masculine. But we do want her to do justice to her position; we do want her to be able to cultivate fully the rich waste of infancy around her, which she can hardly breathe upon without blighting or vivifying; we do want her to be an intelligent companion to her husband; and, we may add, that we also want her mind to be, for her own sake, kept fully occupied, that it might be fully happy. Work for all hours of the day is the unavoidable lot of humanity; with it are wedded ease, comfort, and happiness; the mind that is unoccupied is apt to roam where it should not: and, to protect the Hindu wife from these evils, should the storehouse of knowledge be opened to her.

The 'ornamental' comes last in our plan of education, because, at this moment at least, Young India does not much appreciate it, all that he wishes evidently being that his wife should be wise, gentle, and steady, both as wife and mother. On the one hand, he does not want her to enter the lists with men, either for station, fortune, fame, or power; on the other, he does not wish her to be all day either over the piano, or before the glass. The mistaken gallantry of men has done a great deal of mischief in Europe in this respect, which need not be repeated in India. The condition of woman in India is bad enough already without it; but, bad as it is, we would rather wish her to continue in it, than that she should be converted into a doll or painted image, to receive the

sickly and sentimental devotion which it is the fashion in Europe to render to her. Rescue her from the personal restraints and moral disadvantages she labours under, free her from bondage, raise her to the sphere Providence manifestly intended for her; but do not change her into a plaster-cast ninny.

The best hope of female education in India rests with Young India, that is, with the youths of the rising generation in every part of the country; and of this Young India is well aware. For some time it was a charge against him that he was indifferent to his womankind. But he has long since passed through the phases of libertinism and Bábooism with which he started, and is now a sober and steady advocate of progression and reform. The age of 'home indifference' has gone by; he now prizes his household deities as they ought to be prized, though the adoration of romance be not yet understood. What he does understand is the affection of everyday life; and, to our thinking, female education is, and must be, greatly dependent on that. The men have shown clearly that they appreciate educated wives; and educated wives are springing up on all sides around them to meet the demand. We depend on this demand more hopefully than upon extraneous exertions, either of missionaries or of the Government. As a general rule there is still a vast difference between Young India and his wife, and this difference has to be squared up. If the wish to square it up, which has arisen, continues unabated for a while, there is much to hope for, and nothing to despair of. The progress as yet has been slow, the success very limited; but, such as they are, even now there is almost no family of the respectable classes in which the ladies do not read and write under the superintendence of their nearest male relatives. Home-teaching, we all know, is the best teaching in the world; and, if Young India perseveres in imparting it, there is no reason why the Hindu woman should not, within a few decades, become in her own secluded apartment as intelligent a wife and as useful a mother as any in Christendom.

Nor is it the women only who will profit by this process. Such teaching must always act and react, both on tutor and pupil. The idea of being inferior to his wife in knowledge is always unendurable to a husband; and it cannot be said that India does not want incentives of this nature to stir up her young men to greater ventures on their own behalf. Of one fine girl educated in Mrs. Wilson's school at Calcutta, Mrs. Chapman, in her little volume on *Female Education*, records that, on being married, 'she contrived to obtain a promise from her husband that she should continue to attend the school,' and that, eventually, 'she taught him to read.' The fitness of women to teach women and children is unquestionable; their influence over their husbands is almost equally certain.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### HOME-LIFE IN BENGAL.

A GLANCE at the home-life of the Hindu will not be uninteresting, and will, perhaps, give us a better idea of his condition at this moment than anything else. As a rule all over India the inhabitants, both rich and poor, live in separate houses, each family being private and conducting its own housekeeping. Leasing an entire house is common, but leasing a part of it or a set of apartments is exceedingly rare. It is an arrangement not convenient to either lessor or lessee, particularly as the women of one family may not associate with, or be seen by, the men of another. But all of the same family generally live together. Though there be half-a-dozen brothers, they make it convenient to have one house in common, if only for cheapness' sake; and this of course converts the place into a rabbit-warren, over-populous with children. The accommodation under such circumstances cannot but be contracted; but to a people fond of simple and inexpensive living this hardly causes much inconvenience. The Hindu takes it quietly; partly because of his small means, but more especially on account of his strong good sense. It enables a poor family to manage with only one servant in common, though rich families of course have as many as they can pay for.

We will conduct the reader to one of these family-houses in Bengal, the province with which we are best acquainted; and shall suppose the house to belong to a man of fortune,

some time retired from business. The dwellings of all classes are on one plan, but the size and materials of building are of course different. Of the poorer classes the houses are made of mud hardened by the sun, or of unburnt brick, while those of the richer classes are built entirely of burnt brick, some of them being further paved with stone. The one before us is, we shall suppose, built mainly of brick, an immense pile, rather pretty-looking from without, but having few conveniences for an Englishman within. The first thing remarkable upon entering it is a capacious compound, surrounded on three sides by palatial verandás, and on the fourth—always the north or east, which are sacred points—by a splendid *dállán*, or open hall. This *dállán* serves as a chapel for celebrating the annual festivals in, while throughout the year it is used as a school-room for teaching the young folks of the house Bengali. You may see all the boys of the family, numbering about ten, twelve, or fourteen, assembled there in the morning, squatting on the floor, sometimes all on one mat, oftener on a small separate mat each, and working on their palm or plantain leaves, or on paper, according to the progress they may have made, under the superintendence of the old family *gooroomohásoy*, who, like the 'parish clerk and sexton,' is the *sircár*, accountant, and pedagogue of the house. Those of the youngsters who attend the English schools are accommodated in a separate apartment, furnished with tables and chairs, slates, pencils, good writing-paper, and quills; and an educated Young Bengal is generally to be seen superintending their tuition. The time for the *pátsálá* is from morning to about 10 A.M. The English school-room at home breaks up at least an hour earlier, to enable the children to get ready for their school.

The staircase of the house to which the reader has been introduced happens, we shall say, to be a wooden one, which is rather uncommon in a native house, and is only to be found in those recently built or repaired; but it is not prominently situated, and has neither matting nor carpet. It leads up to the verandá, which conducts the

visitor to the great hall. The furniture of the hall is of course the best in the house, but is altogether poor. There is a grand display of gold and crimson everywhere, but the whole is tawdry and inexpensive, and there is hardly anything very remarkable in it for grace or classical beauty. The pictures on the walls are mere daubs, but the picture-frames are gorgeous. Most of the prints are of Jaggańáths and emperors; scarcely any descriptive of a good scenery or an expressive grouping. Look at that just above the doorway. It is a family-portrait by a native artist. The several likenesses are pretty accurate, but the air, attitude, and grouping are absolutely unnatural. Of course there is no mat or carpet on the floor, for that is paved throughout; and you see at a glance that the apartment cannot be used except on state occasions.

The other rooms have, for the most part, a naked aspect, except the two little chambers on each side of the hall, which, as appendages of the hall, are neatly matted, and furnished with several articles of exquisite workmanship, if the visitor can but reconcile himself to the national taste for frippery, which is to be seen in everything about the Bengali, including the ornaments of his wife and children.

Neither the hall nor the rooms attached to it are for daily use. But do not jump to the conclusion that the Bengali is necessarily an unsocial fellow, for just the contrary is absolutely true. Rich and poor are very fond of clubbing together, and chatting away their hours. By the doorway on the first floor you will always see either a long bench or a number of wooden stools, to invite in passing acquaintances to a pull at the *hookáh*, the greatest delight of the Hindu, without reference to rank or age; and of course there is a large, capacious room for their reception upstairs. Here you may frequently see a motley crowd of half-clad men sitting at their ease on a long Mirzápore carpet, some reclining on big pillows, all indifferently but clamorously engaged in conversation, the dress of each consisting of a *dhoti*, nine or ten cubits long and two and a half broad, and a *chádur*, six cubits by three, the latter of which is

generally laid by upon the nearest pillow. A dignified old age always receives the greatest deference; and a youngster accosting an old man in the manner English youths often accost their seniors—'How are you, old fellow?' or, 'Well, old boy!'—would not be tolerated in any company. In fact, it is uncourteous to address an old man without using the word *mohasoy*, or master, which is even constantly interchanged by equals, who ask each other for *commands* when wishing to hear anything, and never part with each other without respectful salutations. This courteous behaviour is not confined to the higher classes, being observable also among the humblest orders; and even among relatives it is disrespectful to call one older than one's self by name.

Do you wish to know who the parties are whom you find met together? We shall try to enlighten you. That round-paunched Bráhman there is the Gossáinjee, or the spiritual guide of the family; the spare man at his side, with the badge of regeneration on his breast prominently displayed, is the *dállál*, or broker; the oily Báboo to the right is the master of the house; the one to the left is his neighbour, Mecharám Nundy, known far and wide as the best hand at the fishing-rod within an area of twenty miles; and that yellow-faced, ogre-eyed man, with a dirty rag round his loins—so dirty as if there never was a washerman in the country—is the great Ghunto Kissore Sarbádhikári, whose nephew was for several years well known in Calcutta as the 'Begging Baboo,' and whose grandson was convicted of having stolen a book from the *Metropolitan Circulating Library*—the greatest live Kulin in Bengal! Of the crowd around these we can give no particular information. It comprises *omedwárs*, pimps, the Báboo's servants (who, being of the same caste, have the privilege of sitting alongside of him), and professional sharpers. Some, you may see, are chewing *pán*, others smoking the *hookáh*, several deeply engaged at chess, others merely talking to each other—a cloud of tobacco-smoke rising over all, and a confused hum of cheerful gossip. This is a friendly party. They are all almost completely engrossed

in their several ways; but you have only to sneeze or yawn, and every eye will be drawn to you at once, and every tongue will say, 'May you live long!'

Do you want to know what the subjects of conversation are? Listen, and you will be astonished at the indifference with which they are being debated. One party is discussing the great question of 'Taxation in India;' another, 'The prospects of the natives under British rule;' a third, 'The probabilities of a new war between France and Germany;' a fourth, 'The progress of Christianity;' a fifth, 'The great advance made by Russia in Central Asia;' and a sixth, 'The heresy and corruption of the rising generation,' which is almost a perpetual theme of complaint. Questions of life-and-death importance to the country are being discussed in a cold, callous manner, interrupted by puffs from the *hookáh* and moves on the chessboard, but, ordinarily, with the greatest politeness, though in language often extravagantly hyperbolical. The Gossáinjee is never addressed by any of the Sudras present except as his 'saviour,' or his 'father and mother,' or as 'an incarnation of virtue;' the owner of the house is always 'equal to Karna as a benefactor,' and 'to Yudhisthira in truthfulness,' and is, moreover, 'the father and mother of all Bráhmans and cows;' while the rest of the party are to each other invariably 'excellent' and 'illustrious,' and 'possessed of glorious attributes.' Even for his inferiors the Hindu of rank has always a civil and kindly word; and he rarely allows himself to be provoked by harsh language or abuse, except in the heat of a recriminative discussion.

Change the scene. In a rather obscure part of the house, just behind the *dállán*, is a fine long room, where you will see another company, composed of some ten or fifteen young men, with the *chillum* and the *pán* before them, and some bottles in the background, where perhaps you cannot see them. They are all students either of the Medical or the Presidency College, or of both, and are certainly a very intelligent and genial-looking set, carrying on their

conversation in an unrestrained, smart, and interesting manner. They have also had lessons on the *tubláw*, and can sing with great spirit. Do you think the party an agreeable one? It seems so. But let the stranger move out, and the bottles will move forward, and they will have a hell to themselves before they part.

All this time what part are the women playing? We must get into the *zenáná* to see that. Ah, poor women! so simple and good-natured, having no lady-like pride, patient and enduring, gentle and loving, how are ye cared for?

Making allowances for a queer taste, the women's apartments are always prettily ornamented. The furniture is not very rich or expensive; but everything is neat and orderly, from the door-mat and the spitting-vessel to the daubs pasted on the walls, representing the countless millions of gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon. One of the most prominent articles of furniture, almost in every room, is the cot or *tuktposh* to sleep upon. The beds are almost all of them well-made and very commodious, for the Bengali loves to roll in bed. There is first the *tuktposh*, which is a very wide bench, or rather a number of wide benches put together; then a mat or carpet on it; then a mattress, commonly of cotton, which makes the bed somewhat too warm; then a cotton *lape*, which is a light and soft mattress, over it; and then the bed-sheet, and an infinite number of pillows. Carpeting the room is not in fashion in the *zenáná*, but there are small carpets for the ladies to sit upon, which have the advantage of being moveable at pleasure. Painted walls are now coming into vogue, and light-curtains at the windows; and if the furnitures are not all the most appropriate, there are always plenty of articles to fill up space.

But the inmates of the *zenáná* are more worthy of attention than any article of furniture in it. The women of Bengal are full of kindness and fidelity, and are besides simple and self-sacrificing, and very amiable. Unfortunately, they are nothing more. The mind of a Bengali

woman is not well cultivated, and her understanding not very strong; but she has often an excellent practical sense, and is never too proud for her humble post, and her beautiful home virtues and cheerful forbearance are exceedingly exemplary. She is patient and enduring, however toilsome may be her position in life; gentle and loving, even when loaded with privations; a tender slave, though often despised for her slavishness. In sickness she is a hospital nurse without wages—none so expert in smoothing the weary pillow, performing cheerless duties to thankless masters, and meeting the querulousness of disease with 'the soft answer which turneth away wrath.' The man she loves and works for treats her, it may be, with undeserved indifference, if not with positive harshness. But, poor soul! she has no idea of a happier life, and bears harshness quite gently, and devotes her time and tenderness to conciliate that affection, to win and keep which is her being's end and aim.

The occupations of a Hindu wife are, first, to have the house swept and cleansed, a task she performs herself if the family be poor; then to wash the cast-off clothes of the family, and hang them up to dry; then to bathe and dry her hair in the sun; then to perform her devotions, never failing to repeat prayers for the long life of her husband and children, and that they might survive her; and then to superintend the kitchen operations, which is always a favourite employment. For hours and hours she has to sit enshrined in the midst of *ghee*, oil, spices, *torkári* or vegetables, and fish, apportioning them according to the requirements of the family, giving lucid directions in regard to their preparation, and distributing them personally when the time for doing so arrives, when it devolves on her to see that all members of the family are well fed. After this she has ample leisure to take her own meal and noonday nap, and, also, to amuse herself in card-playing with her female friends, a male never making one of the party. She then goes to her toilette, wipes her body, combs and

dresses her hair, and adjusts her ornaments, and puts a patch of vermilion—which is a privilege of the married state only—on her forehead. After this, she superintends the preparation of the evening meal, in the same fashion as she superintended the preparation of the dinner during the first part of the day; and, this done, the rest of the evening is holiday again, only she has still to look after the children—to dress them, and feed them, and put them to sleep.

Of her menial occupations, perhaps the hardest and most inconvenient is cooking, where she has to attend to it personally, which is a frequent case. We have spoken to several Báboos on the subject, and asked them why they do not intrust the cooking to servants, when they can afford to pay a Bráhman, and the answer invariably has been that they are afraid that their dishes would not, in that case, be so well cooked as at present, as those who have tried the experiment have found to their cost. There is, doubtless, a great deal of truth in this. The culinary process among the Hindus is a very different thing from that among the Christians; and very great attention and cleverness are required to prepare from a few common vegetables and fishes the excellent dishes, often completely differing from each other in taste, flavour, and richness, which the women manage to make out of them. But still, for all that, to convert one's wife, sister, or mother into a cook does not appear to be a particularly bright idea, and smacks a little too much of indifference to the ties and responsibilities of relationship.

Of the objects thus neglected it would not be too much to say that they are excessively modest and pre-eminently interesting. Their pretensions to beauty are not slender—round, plump faces, smooth, clear skin, long, raven hair, large, sparkling eyes, shaded by long, dark lashes, and a sprightly gait, being common traits of beauty. They are married early, and become early mothers, and also early get old—'flowers of too short a duration not to be beautiful, too beautiful to last long.' A woman who has passed her twentieth year has passed her bonnier summers; at

thirty she is accounted old; at forty becomes ugly. But the goodness of her heart has a longer tenure, extending from childhood to the remotest old age.

From women to children is an easy slide, and the objects are at least as interesting. Look at that merry group of little ones there, all in the state of nature, dancing to their hearts' content; that other, running after something—perhaps a poor unfortunate kitten, that has somehow or other attracted attention; or, that third party there, assembled to concert some puerile mischief. Are they not interesting? The mothers are drudging away at some nook or corner. Nurses they have none, or only one in common, who is busy after her own affairs, and yet they manage to pass their time without coming to loggerheads frequently, or encountering any serious accidents.

This is one aspect under which you see them. Would you like to have another view of them? It is by no means a rare sight to see a cluster of them assembled in the evening around an old woman, to hear some dismal story of robbers, hobgoblins, and incantations. 'Come, grandmamma, come, tell us all about it, taking up where you left it unfinished last night.' The story must be told at night, the fact being that during the day the women have no time to chat idly, and the night, therefore, is the only time for humouring the children. 'Come, grandmamma, out with it;' and grandmamma recommences her yarn—a yarn she herself had heard when a child, and which has been told to several generations over and over, and has been heard by each with equal avidity and terror. The spinning of these yarns continues till it is time to go to bed.

From a good-looking house we will now conduct the reader to an old and dreary-looking one; but he must not think for a moment that it is necessarily the residence of a poor man. It is the dwelling-house of no less a person than Hurrypuddo Chatterjee, the great zemindár, who keeps a hundred and fifty *lattiáls* in his service, and whose name is always at the top of, or at least very high up in, the charity lists. He is the friend of the destitute and the

distressed, and actually proposed to the Government the erection of a hospital at Kámárpooker, and the establishment of a school at Chutnee Bázaár, offering to pay half the expense himself. He is a great encourager of learning and learned men, and you always find in his house a few of the best students of the 'Universal Knowledge Diffusing Seminary' clubbing together. There they are. Can you guess from their faces the studies they are respectively prosecuting? One is engaged in investigating old languages, with a view to explain the early literature of his country; another is at work on the Persian tongue, with the especial object of appeciating Sádi critically; a third is learning music as a science; many are after a good education; and a few, with an enthusiasm most worthy of success, are learning mathematics, to disprove the Copernican system.

For all his liberality, however, Hurrypuddo is strongly opposed to Christianity. He is not necessarily an irreligious man. The manifestations of piety are as various as are the forms of human nature. It is not the intellectual appreciation of the purest creed that makes the purest man. Many a villain is avowedly a Christian; while, on the other hand, there are several persons who have the most wild and crude notions of God, and yet are His most faithful followers. A religious character is best evinced by a religious life; and Hurrypuddo's life is on the whole an exemplary one, notwithstanding the *láttiáls* in his pay, whose services are of course occasionally called in requisition.

But, though Hurrypuddo does not tolerate Christianity, discussions regarding it are frequent in his house. When the orthodox party muster strong they always close with invective, and the missionaries on such occasions receive a handsome share of abuse. The pure native idea of the missionaries is that they are a godless set of men, seeking to uproot all law and religion, reviling the faith of sages and patriarchs, and all to gain one nefarious object, namely, to bring down everybody to their own low caste. But the missionaries need not be disheartened at this; for when

disputants of different sects discuss their respective beliefs the same scene of quarrel and confusion takes place, and they abuse each other as heartily as they ever abuse the missionaries. Who shall account for the infinite differences of the human mind?

We might here notice in passing that, in colloquial language, particularly when the discussion is rather warm, there is much profanity observable in Hindu conversation. Not only such expressions as 'Rám, Rám; am I telling you an untruth?' 'Rádha, Krishna, I never thought of it'—which are tantamount to 'My God' and 'By God,' which good English society will never tolerate—plentifully used, but expressions much more decidedly objectionable are interchanged, such as we should not like to translate, and which would almost make a stranger believe that the speakers were unbelievers, or at least indifferent in their religious beliefs. But they are neither. Except a few of the rising generation they are all firm believers in Hinduism, and would never dream of slighting it.

There is generally a garden, or an apology for a garden, attached to the house of every rich man. Usually it is not a very tasteful one, and is kept in bad repair. But it is invariably well stocked with fruit-trees, which are preferred to flower-plants; while the few flower-plants that are reared are always of the fragrant kind. Unsmelling foreign flowers are not much prized, except by Young Bengal when he affects to be a botanist. Oftentimes, at the centre of the garden stands a tank, and this not being kept clean gives rise to much sickness in the family. It makes amends, however, by finding occupation for all the idlers of the house, angling being a very favourite amusement with the Hindus. The fishing-rod, with a worm at one end and an amateur-fisherman at the other, may almost be said to be a popular institution all over the country.

The only other remarkable appendage of the building is the dairy. Almost every house has it. The poor have often no more than a single cow, while the rich have sometimes so many as ten or fifteen. This does not add much

to neatness or cleanliness, and it may be conceded even that it contributes a trifle to the filthiness of the house. But the arrangement is convenient in this way, that for the large number of children in it a good supply of fresh milk daily is easily secured.

The hours of rising among all classes of Hindus are earlier than with Europeans even in India. Everybody is up before the sun—some so much as two hours earlier. The first thing done in the morning is mouth-washing, and with many, bathing also, the ablution being performed in a river or tank, if there happen to be any within a reasonable distance of the house. This is followed by the worship of the *griha-devatás*, after which the gentlemen go to their house-entrance or portico, pulling at their *hookáhs*, while the women go to their household work and the kitchen.

Men of business always take their first substantial meal (the dinner of the Hindu) at nine; idlers defer it to a later hour, so late as even one o'clock; while with tradespeople, who are their own masters, the usual hour for it is between two and three. The arrangement of the courses need not be recapitulated to ears polite. It will be enough to mention that the rice is served on a pewter plate, and the curries in small pewter and stone vessels resembling cups; and that the light dishes precede, the course opening with fruits, pulse, and the like, which are succeeded by rice and soup, fish of various kinds, served in various ways, and some delicacies in the shape of cakes, puddings, and so forth, that which comes last being a dish of milk, generally boiled thick and well sugared. A good family-dinner is never made up of less than five large dishes, and nearly as many small ones to sharpen the appetite, many of these latter being exceedingly nice to the taste. Some of the dishes, however, consist of sweets a great deal more than any doctor would recommend; and they are all of them generally characterized by a total absence of animal food, which is abstained from principally because it is compara tively expensive, and, also, because it is supposed, with much reason, to be unsuited to the climate. A simple vegetable diet in India imparts

to the breath and person a peculiarly sweet fragrance, while the regular use of animal food generates a fetid odour which often precedes other unfavourable results.

The technicalities of society are curious. In India every man—from the prince to the peasant, women as well as their lords—squat down on the floor, the rich on small carpets, the poor on the bare ground, to take their meals, and use the fingers of the right hand in primitive fashion in doing so. This among Europeans is a social crime; but in what does the misdemeanour consist? The best-bred Hindu sees nothing disgusting or offensive in the act. He takes care to wash his hand before he begins, and he does so again after he has ended. If prejudice did not prevent them from admitting it, even Europeans would not perhaps hesitate to own that the Hindu, in this respect at least, is really more cleanly than those parties (not few in number) who eat with a fork without knowing whether it has been washed or not, and consider it unnecessary trouble to wash their hands and mouth after taking their meals.

The Hindu dinner is not a social one only in this sense, that the women do not join the men in partaking of it. Hindu etiquette does not allow the male and female members of a house to take their meals together. On this point even individual notions are often very peculiar; and we all know that Lord Byron could not endure to see women eat. But that the family meals are not necessarily unsocial will be understood from the fact that, generally, all the adult males sit down to eat together, while all the children do the same separately, often in an adjoining apartment, the housewife being present at both places at the same time; that is, constantly moving about from one to the other, till the wants of all parties are fully satisfied. If she sits down before the master of the house for a while, it is only to see particularly that he has had all the dishes given to him, and to report to him the general management of the house, for which this is always held to be the fittest time.

The other talk during meals is generally confined to the

quality of the cooking; and, if the cook of the day be some favourite daughter or daughter-in-law, or any young girl of the family, she is always complimented and the dishes praised. Occasionally, other family matters are discussed. Should questions not relating to the family come to be spoken of, the good housewife takes no part in the conversation, as she has usually a large share of good breeding and common-sense, and intuitively knows what she is expected to avoid.

The most characteristic peculiarities of the Hindu while at meals are: that he has a distinct plate to himself, which cannot be touched by any one—not even by his nearest and dearest relative—without the food being polluted and rendered unfit for further use; that his body cannot be touched by any one—not even by his own wife—without the food being likewise contaminated and rejected; and that it is not permissible, when several persons sit down to eat together, for any one of them to leave his seat till all the others have finished eating. It will also be considered curious that nothing left on the plate can be taken back into the kitchen, being fit for no other purpose than to be thrown to the dogs, or given away to people of the very lowest castes.

After his morning or his mid-day meal, as the case may be, the office drudge goes to serve a master with his mouth full of *pán*, or betel and spices, and after a hasty pull at the *hookáh;* while the idler generally takes a nap, which seldom lasts longer than two hours. This constant laziness does great mischief. The Bengali will make no physical effort when he can avoid it. He has an aversion to open-air movements. There are no athletic games or sports for boys, and for grown-up men to indulge in anything of the kind is considered outrageously indecent. Boxing, fencing, shooting, as morning exercises, would do a great deal of good; but they are eschewed as abominable habits. For cricket they have *kabádi*—a very good exercise, but exclusively for boys. Rowing is a class privilege peculiar to a boatman, and cannot be resorted to even for health with-

out detriment to one's importance; and mallets and dumb-bells are generally left to *durwáns*, or door-keepers. Even to enjoy a tumbling frolic with children is unbecoming a grown-up man; and, in the midst of this total absence of activity, comes in the mid-day nap to make the whole race a nation of dyspeptics. The bodily weakness of the Bengali is proverbial. Much of it is attributable to the climate; not a little to the absence of healthy amusements and to mid-day sleeping.

But though the Bengalis have no active amusements, they have plenty of entertainments after their own fashion, and the holidays are much enjoyed. The English way of observing religious festivals with sour faces and unsocial reserve is unknown among them. There is on such occasions company in every house of pretension, and the days are well employed, though not always in a very intellectual manner. The nasty old houses almost look up again; superb carpets, lustres, and girandoles bedeck all the saloons and verandás; and there is no end to music, *pán*-chewing, and *hookáh*-smoking.

After his mid-day nap, the Báboo dresses and goes out. Where does he go to? Never mind that; the fact we want to state is this, that nobody lives at home in the afternoon. You find your acquaintances in villas, gardens, promenades—even in places where no gentleman ought to be found, but not at home. They are always sure to be out; and, generally, they are out till a late hour at night, though the outward signs of dissipation are confined to the very high and very low classes only.

On his return home at night the Bengali takes a second hearty meal, sometimes so late as at ten or eleven P.M. Fruits, as may be expected from their plenty and cheapness, form a prominent item of it, which consists, further, of *loochies* or *chuppáties* made of flour; curries of several kinds, prepared of roots and vegetables, with or without fish; and a variety of sweetmeats. Many take, besides, a good cup of milk at bedtime, just as some Europeans take a glass of brandy or a pint of beer.

At night the family-house generally presents a pleasing scene. Except in special cases, there is seldom drunkenness and hideous rioting at home. If drinking has become common among the youths of the rising generation, another vice, never uncommon among drunkards, keeps most of them away from home till the fumes of the brandy are spent; and in the family-house temperance prevails, as a general rule, to an extraordinary extent. There are many educated young men, however, who do not frequent the pandemoniums of the towns, and of these some occasionally do make a hell of their own houses, or rather a part of their houses, Old Bengal taking good care that they do not encroach too much.

The most notable peculiarities of the Bengali character are simplicity of life and frugality. With few exceptions, the men of all ranks, but especially of the middle classes, are very moderate in their expenses. Money, which is made by them with greater difficulty, is never spent so easily as by Europeans. Englishmen talk of economy, the Bengali practises it. He is also, generally, very sensible and practical, though not particularly exalted in his ideas. He is not an active being, and has no enthusiasm whatever about him; but he is very rational, and, as such, has a stock of common-sense which two Englishmen might divide between them with advantage. Lastly, he is very social and hospitable. Though there is caution, there is no coldness in forming acquaintances, and an acquaintance of twenty-four hours' standing will often settle down into confirmed friendship. In hospitality after his own fashion, also, he has no superior in any part of the world. No guest is ever turned out of doors, however unseasonably he may have entered them. As castes vary, the guest has no particular chamber allotted to him. The guest-chamber, in fact, is often none other than the *dállán*—the bed, the genuine patriarchal bed, consisting only of a mat, a curtain, and a pillow. But the stranger is always sure of a hearty meal, and of every kindness that his circumstances may require.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### PEASANT LIFE, AND THE PERPETUAL SETTLEMENT.

INDIA is the land of peasant classes; of manufacturers and artisans the number in it is very inconsiderable. The children of the soil depend entirely on the products of the soil for their livelihood. These classes are distinguished by the well known name of *Ryots*. They are of all castes, for the earth is pure to everybody. Besides those who cultivate their own plots of land and do nothing else, there are those who till the ground for others, getting a share in the produce; and those who live by other modes of employment have still some lands to fall back upon. There are absolutely none almost who do not derive benefit, in some shape or other, from land. This has been the state of things from the earliest times. In the *Rig Ved* there is a hymn in which the *Khetra-pati*, or deity of the soil, is invoked for a blessing on field operations and cultivators, who were even then a numerous body. What is curious is that water-courses are alluded to in the text, and artificial channels dug up for the conveyance of water, which would seem to indicate that the irrigation of lands was then already understood. How have the classes, so employed from that time to this, thriven in the land? The reply must be: 'Not well in recent times; perhaps not well at any stage.'

It is hard to determine if the appearance of the villages in Bengal indicate poverty or idleness. In many instances the one is but the result of the other, but this is not in-

variably the case. As a rule, the ryot works hard, though only to the point that enables him to pay off his liabilities and provide for the immediate wants of himself and his family. Beyond this line he is averse to go, and it is on that account only that he is never free from incumbrances. Of acute misery or downright wretchedness the instances are rare, because the instances of absolute idleness and apathy are exceptional. Where difficulties are encountered, they are, for the most part, traceable to the ryot's recklessness. He lives on nothing but rice and *dál*, with salt and chillies for condiments, vegetables and fish coming only for a holiday; his dress is simply a *dhoti*, often worse for the wear, which is never augmented by a *chádur*, except in the cold weather; his bed is a *durmá*, or coarse mat, without the luxury of a pillow; his house a thatched cottage, certainly well-looking, but comparatively inexpensive; his property a plough, hoe, and mattock, two bullocks, and some seed-grains, with a brass *thálá* and *lotáh* in especial cases, these being oftener represented by a broken earthen plate and an earthen jug; and yet this man, so self-denying in respect to the necessaries of life, is constantly borrowing money, not simply, as is generally represented, to meet the fraudulent demands made on him by the zemindárs, their *náibs* and *gomástás*, and the petty district-officials, but oftener to spend it in marriages and *shráds*, on a scale quite disproportionate to his position and means. He is, nevertheless, rarely bankrupt. His general position is that of a poor man obliged to submit to a certain amount of inevitable hardship, which is more or less the position of his compeers all over the world; but there are those who are able to buy silver ornaments for wife and children, and such are only debarred by the peculiar organization of Hindu society, and not from want of means, to rise in the social scale.

The hamlets all over Bengal are surrounded either by clumps of bamboos or palm, or by scrub jungle, the necessary result of a fertile soil not carefully weeded. There is no road or pathway through them that is fairly accessible,

the only apology for a road being generally, in part at least, a ditch in dry weather and a swamp in the rains. For five months out of twelve every man, woman, and child is to be seen wading through the mud when entering or coming out of their residences. The tanks are full of decaying vegetables and green water. The women are half-clad only, the children completely naked; and even the dogs are half-starved. These are the usual surroundings of the picture without exaggeration. They seem at least to bear strong evidence against the activity and energy of the peasant. Work he does perform; but he works only when he must, and in such manner as is unavoidable: he never works if he can do without it. The cottages in Bengal are the prettiest in India, their thatched roofs and cane or mud walls giving them an appearance of neatness peculiarly their own. But beyond the shed he lives in there is not much of tidiness to be seen around the ryot, though inside his hut things are kept pretty spruce by his womankind, that is, to the extent his means and habits permit.

The ryot rises with the earliest dawn, washes himself clean, and repairs to the field of his labours. After working there for an hour or two, he takes the remnants of the preceding day's food for breakfast, and then continues to work till noon. In the busy seasons his hot noonday dinner is brought to him in the field; but after eating it he always takes a good nap, as Bengalis of all classes do, before resuming his labour. The sleep lasts till two or three in the afternoon, from which time till sunset he is again actively employed, after which he returns home, driving his cattle with him. He then eats his last meal for the day, smokes, and spends the rest of the evening in chatting with his friends. This doubtless is hard work for a Bengali; but it is the routine for particular periods only, namely, the busy seasons. Ordinarily, the ryots do not work in this way throughout the year. If they did there would not be so much borrowing of money and dependence on the *mahájun*, so much payment of hard cash as interest,

so little of saving or surplus to lay by. There is no part of the country where the *mahájun* system of money-lending is not an extremely lucrative trade; and the ryot himself is certainly primarily to blame that it is so.

The Bengal ryot ploughs his land for rice—the *áous*-crop—first in the middle of February, and again, with greater care, in March and April. The land selected for this cultivation is high land, and it is always ploughed three times before being sown, all the labour being performed by bullocks and oxen. The seeds are cast into the ground in the beginning of May, after which the field is harrowed, and then carefully watched to keep off the birds. The business of weeding commences when the crop is about a foot high. When the corn is nearly ripe it has to be watched day and night, and the ryot erects a stage for himself, in which he is constantly present. Harvest commences about the middle of August, when the corn is reaped and bound up in sheaves, and carried home, where it is generally piled in stacks; but it is sometimes also separated at once from the husk with the assistance of bullocks. Kept in husk the grain remains good for several years, but on being cleaned out the lower descriptions of rice get spoiled in six months or a year.

In April, the ryot sows his low lands for his second and principal harvest—the *ámán*-crop. The seeds are first sown thick, and then transplanted in July and August, on a different piece of ground especially prepared for the purpose. The rice stands in water throughout the rains, the ear always rising above the water's edge; and it is reaped in November and December. The *áous* harvest closes in September, and is followed by the annual *poojáh* festivities, of which the *Lakshmi Poojáh* is decidedly a harvest festival, as the doggerel sung on the illumination-night clearly testifies:

> 'Ánjooray, pinjooray, Lakshmir poojáh dey;
> Áous dhán, parángi dhán, goláya ootay chey.'*

* *Anglicè:*

> 'Give *poojáh* to Lakshmi with bonfire;
> Our *áous* and *parángi* crops have been harvested.'

The *ámán* harvest closes in the height of the cold weather, and is followed by the festival of cakes, the cakes being eaten with great zest both by rich and poor, though unaccompanied by their proverbial attendant in other countries—creaming ale.

The other crops cultivated in Bengal are wheat, barley, pulse, mustard, linseed, sugar-cane, turmeric, ginger, tobacco, indigo, jute, etc., all of which are grown on high ground, namely, that released or unoccupied by the *áous*-crop. If the land be rich, two, three, and in some districts four crops are obtained from it within the year; but the land which bears the *ámán*-crop bears that one crop only and none other, and, if that fails, there is scarcity and distress, to the ryot at least, if not among the higher classes also. If he had been less dependent on the *máhájun* and more reliant on his own industry and intelligence, this distress would never have been overwhelming. But he is so conservative and wedded to old prejudices that, though quite awake to his own interests, he will adopt no new methods to serve them. His apathy in this respect is characteristic. The rudeness and incompleteness of the implements he works with are well known. It is true that, judged by their results, they are not found to be unserviceable, as, notwithstanding their defects, no part of the country remains uncultivated. This is just the view the ryot takes of the matter; he does not perceive that if his implements were improved the out-turn of his field would be considerably increased. Misfortune in the shape of drought or inundation reduces him at once to listless inactivity, while among the peasant races elsewhere they only call forth more energy and exertion.

The general poverty of the Bengal ryot is attributed mainly to the oppression of the zemindár, and the defects of the perpetual settlement. By the perpetual settlement the Government took possession of all the lands of the country as its own, and then distributed them anew among the zemindárs, who were held responsible for the tax charged on their respective allotments. The pre-

existing rights of the ryots were not ignored; but they were not expressly defined, because the Government did not see at the time that such definition was called for. It was anxious to secure for good a larger revenue than the Mogul Government had ever realized from the country, but had no idea that its contract with the zemindárs for the payment of such higher revenue would in any way interfere with the rights and interests of the ryots. The zemindárs, on their part, were equally anxious to complete the contract, as they saw at a glance that, with the transfer of the proprietary-right in the land, they would secure every advantage that they could wish for, including both increase of authority and of income. The ryots had no voice in the matter, nor urged their right to any, having never asserted such right in previous eras. It was fortunate, therefore, that the Government very vaguely reserved to itself the privilege of improving their condition and securing their welfare, which enabled it to legislate to that end after a long interval, when the defects of the perpetual settlement began to be noticed.

The errors of the settlement were twofold, namely, first, that all tillage-rights were by it merged in the proprietary-right given to the zemindár, and, secondly, that it virtually left the zemindár at liberty to dictate his own terms of settlement to the ryot. Both these disadvantages have since been removed by the rent law, that is, so far as it was possible to remove them; and the pledge that the Government had held out to interfere in the interests of the ryots has, to that extent, been redeemed. The law referred to does not profess to be a new law except in respect to one provision; generally it affects to be only a recast, in a modern and tangible shape, of all that was understood in the past to be the law in force in respect to ryot-rights. Three classes of ryots are recognised by it, namely, (1) those holding lands in succession to holders at the time of the perpetual settlement; (2) those holding lands for twelve years and more; (and (3) those holding lands for shorter periods. No enhancement of rent in

regard to holders of the first class is permitted, and so no pretext is left to the zemindár to tyrannize over them. The other two classes are both made subject to enhancement of rent, but with a difference. The new enactment in the law is that referring to the second and most numerous class of holders, who are declared to be not oustable from their holdings so long as they pay a fair and equitable rent, such as leaves them full remuneration for their capital and labour; but the third class of holders are held to be mere tenants-at-will, having no rights requiring to be protected.

The clause enacted on behalf of the second class of holders virtually gave to every ryot having rights all the protection he stood in need of against a misuse of power on the part of the zemindár. The difficulty still remained as to the determination of 'fair' and 'equitable' rent; but this has rarely been practically felt. When the zemindár enhances the rent and another ryot is willing to give the rate asked for, that rate becomes *primâ facie* 'fair' and 'equitable,' and the ryot who will not agree to it has only to go out. If from mere malice or the sake of persecution the rates are raised, redress is obtainable by a suit for abatement of rent. The protection that was most needed was, therefore, fully secured, at least so far as the law could secure it. The evil of the uncertainty and tediousness of all legal processes of course exists; it has never been found practicable to abrogate it completely in any place.

Even as regards the third class of ryots, though their rights are ignored by the law, the zemindár is, as a rule, obliged to go with the times and accept the rates that they are able to pay. His power to raise the rent is unquestionable; the law only requires him to give a formal written notice of his wish to the ryot at the commencement of the year. But, though legal, such increase can rarely be practically safe. A general ejectment of ryots from mere oppression would soon place the zemindár himself in the wrong box, as the ryots unjustly pressed would always get their old terms, if equitable, under other landlords;

and thus, while nothing would be gained by the zemindár in sending them adrift, much might be lost by him if the ryots sent away are not quickly replaced. The common objection to the perpetual settlement that it is too harsh towards the ryot is, therefore, scarcely tenable. In all contests between a rich man and a poor man, the power to harass will always be with the former; and in this way the zemindár may have the ryot in his power. But that is no more the fault of the perpetual settlement than the other thousand ills created by differences of position in life. As the law has left him, the Bengal ryot is certainly not overtaxed; for he does not pay more revenue than the North-Western Provinces' ryot, even though he incurs no expense on irrigation, as the other does. The population of the same class in several countries in Europe, differences in wants and climates considered, are in exactly the same position with the ryots of Bengal, as the perpetual settlement has left them; nay, all circumstances considered, the condition of the Bengal ryots seems to be a trifle better than that of the Irish peasants.

Of course, the zemindárs do not perform their duty to the ryots to the extent they ought; and there is no doubt that, apart from oppressions practised under the alleged protection of the law, a good many other acts of tyranny are perpetrated. There was a time when villages were burnt, crops plundered, and atrocities committed with the connivance of the police; but the police has been reformed, and such outrages have considerably abated. The principal feature of present oppressions is the exaction of illegal dues, which the ryot can never evade except by the exhibition of a spirit which he has not yet acquired, and to contest which in a law-court would only be an additional trouble to him if continuance on the land be considered desirable. When the ryot marries he must pay something to the zemindár; when the zemindár marries, or there is a marriage in his family, the ryot must pay a rate to make up the expenditure; the family *poojáh* in the zemindár's house requires a contribution; even a great *shrád* in the

family necessitates a general collection. Then the zemindár has markets of his own, in which he wants his ryots to make their purchases; he decides disputes between different ryots, and exacts payment of something for his decision; he chooses to visit his zemindáry personally, and expects *nuzzers* to be paid to him; his *náib* and *gomástá* are constantly claiming *párbooni*, or festival presents, which cannot be refused. It is not possible to describe all the various ways by which these and similar exactions are raised. On matters of this nature no ryot can afford to disagree with his zemindár. 'Who,' says the native saying, 'can quarrel with the alligator and live in water?' These are, however, just the exactions which no protective law in the universe could prevent. It is the spirit of the people that must rise to repel them. If the country is being laid waste by the zemindárs in this way, as their enemies represent, it is only because the people are too timid or too indolent to resist them. The ryots are neither legally nor actually helpless in these matters; if they will not assert their rights for fear of being involved in troubles and difficulties, they have themselves only to blame. Is the oppression of the zemindár the cause of the ryot's slavishness, or its effect?

The number of oppressive zemindárs is daily decreasing —in fact, the great zemindárs have, as a rule, long ceased to tyrannise. They have come gradually to understand that, in the long-run, it does not 'pay' them to do so; that their best interests are identical with those of their ryots. It is the petty zemindárs only, more properly distinguished by the name of subordinate zemindárs, who, to eke out a profit over and above that payable by them to the primary zemindárs, have recourse to every little game of oppression that they can play out to secure their ends.

But the times are changing rapidly. If the ryot was not independent before, he is becoming independent now, improving in that respect almost day by day. He has entered a new phase of existence, and is outgrowing his baby-clothes with great celerity. This is the effect of the

Rent Law, which has released him from the position of a bondsman. No zemindár can now maltreat him to the same extent, or nearly to the same extent, as in the past All that he can now do is to enhance the rent, and eject him under certain circumstances; but of course no ryot would be thus ejected unless the zemindár succeeded in getting a better-paying man in his place. His personal freedom has been secured, a certainty of tenure under definite conditions has been given to him, and the produce of his labours has been fully and amply protected. This could not but inaugurate a marked social and moral progress in his condition; and such progress is now everywhere to be seen. The ryot was always in want before, always in debt; he has begun now—in some cases at least —to regulate his expenditure by his income, and this is one step and a great step gained. Hired labour is becoming dearer every day; the rates of servants' wages in metropolitan towns have enormously increased. What does this mean but that the ryot gets enough now from his land to enable him to live with his family, which renders it unnecessary for him to go abroad in search of other work when agricultural labour is not pressing? He has now an idea of his own lands which he never had before; has a dependence on his own labours, which in itself is a novel feeling; can calculate on his own wants, of which he never had the slightest idea in the past; and husbands his own profits, which he did not dream of under the borrowing system to which he was so partial. The rage to get lands is in itself a sign of the times. Every one now wants lands —the domestic servant, the peon, the *durwán*, the barber, even the Bráhman cook, is anxious to invest his savings in a small *khet* or two, and in a yoke or two of oxen; and would this be the case if the ryot's life were still as bad as before? The domestic servants are now constantly overstaying their leave, and every inquiry elicits the fact that they are busily at work on their own fields—ploughing, sowing, harrowing, or reaping—and are therefore unable to come.

This speaks volumes. Every man is once more making his house his home, which never was the case during the long era of Mahomedan subjection. All over the country European agency is actively at work, exploring mines, growing tea, cultivating hemp, flax, jute, and silk, and clearing waste lands. The ryots are working under them, or side by side with them. This, which gave rise to many oppressions at the outset, has gradually given the ryot an immense start in life, by opening his eyes to a better appreciation of his position, and of the method by which his rights are to be vindicated. The advance is already very considerable; in particular instances it has almost assumed the character of open resistance; but utmost progress by the civilised scale has not, of course, yet been attained. The beginning and the end have always an immense interval between them; but the ryot is now in a fair way of attaining the end in due course.

The cry still is—'Do away with the perpetual settlement;' and the illegal exactions of the zemindárs fully justify the demand. But the difficulties in the way of abolishing that to which permanence has been given by law are necessarily insurmountable. The only way in which all parties could be satisfied would be to fix the rent payable by each ryot on an equitable basis, and then make a new perpetual settlement with the zemindár, with a profit of say forty per cent., as in temporarily-settled estates. But this would not only ride through the existing perpetual settlement; it would make all subsequent perpetual settlements revisable at will. It would also entail an immense loss of revenue on the Government, which the Government can scarcely afford.

At present the question between the zemindárs and the ryots seems to be pretty evenly balanced. The right-of-occupancy clauses of the Rent Law have given the ryot what protection he actually stood in need of; the enhancement clauses have, at the same time, given the zemindár the power of readjusting his position to keep pace with improvements. If the zemindár is still oppressive—if he

exacts *ábwábs* in utter indifference to the ryot's rights and his own interests—the ryot has the remedy in his own hands, if he will only exert to apply it effectually. What seems more necessary, therefore, than the revision of the perpetual settlement is the dissemination of education, both among the agricultural classes and the zemindárs, who are almost equally illiterate. The Government might fairly insist on the education of the zemindárs' sons, which would in time give to the country a new race of landholders, who may rise above the conviction, yet so widespread, that the whole duty of their position consists in exhausting the soil and squeezing the ryot. The simultaneous diffusion of knowledge among the ryots, and especially of agricultural knowledge, including the skill of utilizing sewage properly, would make their *khets* doubly productive, and themselves contented and happy. They have no enclosures at present, no manure except for particular descriptions of produce, no irrigation whatever; when they have money to spend, they spend it right jovially on marriage feasts and similar ceremonies, in imitation of rich and middle class people, who can afford such expenditure without difficulty. If a practical knowledge is able to teach them only to make use of their savings properly—in investments which would produce real though distant happiness—the benefit to them and to the country would be immense. A general knowledge among them, even of a rudimentary character, would also give them an idea of independence which they are yet sadly in want of. The people at large might, at the same time, be gradually weaned from their extreme partiality for the possession of land. The scramble for land now is both great and constant, and, such being the case, it is scarcely possible for the condition of the agricultural classes very considerably to improve. If some energy were diverted to manufacture and other spheres of usefulness, everything might yet go on smoothly and to the satisfaction of all parties, notwithstanding the pressure of a perpetual settlement which, with all its faults, has worked fairly enough for nearly ninety years.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE PROSPECTS OF THE COUNTRY.

British India has before it a brilliant future, provided England be equal to her duty. The strength of England has conquered India; and by means of the same strength general peace throughout the country is well maintained. From domestic anarchy and foreign spoliation it has been equally rescued; wars, murders, misrule, and desolation have made room for peace, security, order, and abundance. The frequent recurrence of wars forced the people of entire villages every now and then to fly to the jungles and mountains for safety; this was so equally at the time of the Afghâns, the Páthâns, the Moguls, the Rohillás, and the Mahrattás; it is the British rule only that has made such exodus unnecessary. The villagers at the plough worked armed to the teeth, and were yet uncertain whether they should be able to garner the fruits of their labours; but now the peasant guides the plough as securely as in Europe, and, if the zemindár or the indigo-planter be troublesome at times, the courts give equal redress to the aggrieved against both. The Thugs, Pindáris, and Arracanese were felt as evil angels by the murders and carnage they committed; but they have all settled down as peaceful and inoffensive subjects, themselves seeking that protection which others sought against them. The jungles, which were shared between tigers and robbers, have been converted into villáges intersected by roads and dotted with factories and cutcherries. Canals

have been excavated, fairs established, and premia offered to private enterprize in every direction. The axe, the rack, and the scourge, which were engines of oppression in the past, are not in requisition now even as administrative weapons. All these salutary changes have resulted from English domination, and for these England has received the fullest credit that was due to her.

The security that England has conferred on India is full and complete, and enough to cover a multitude of sins. But are there really a multitude of sins to cover and atone for? The revenue-system was defective and extortionate, but has since been considerably improved; the judicial-system, where it was dilatory and unnecessarily costly, has been recast. If the old roads of the Mahomedans have been allowed to fall into decay—and they had splendid roads all over the country for whole armies to pass by—they have been more than replaced by new roads, railways, steam-ships, and telegraphs. What then are the sins which England has yet to account for? and what is the atonement that India demands of her? To us the shortcomings of England appear to be very trivial, and most of them unavoidable by her very position; and, according to our belief, she is making the best efforts to atone for them.

England raises a larger revenue from the country than Akbar did. There is nothing objectionable in this, since the country is much richer now than it was in the time of the Mahomedans. But the Mahomedans spent all their earnings in the country—foolishly, in pageantries and processions—but, nevertheless, vivifying again the sources whence they were drawn. This is not so now; all the money raised in India by the English is absolutely drained out of it, in the way of salaries, pensions, interest, commercial profits, and industrial savings. Political tribute is not exacted from the country, but still is the country regularly denuded of a large portion of its wealth, for which no adequate return is made to it. The squeezing process was perhaps still better understood in the past,

when the ryot was squeezed by the small landlord, the small landlord by the large proprietor, the large proprietor by some parasite in power, and he again by the sovereign or his deputy. But all the parties who benefited in this way were residents of the country from which they drew their wealth. What was selfishly acquired was selfishly spent, but spent in the country from which it was acquired. The interests and sympathies of the tyrants and their slaves were identical. They had no 'home' to go to, there to spend the earnings of their lives. The sin laid at the door of England in this matter is, however, one that cannot be atoned for; the position of the English as conquerors has no likeness to that which was held by the Mahomedans.

England has introduced free trade in India, and the commerce of the country has been largely increased. But free trade has both its advantages and disadvantages. It has converted India into an extensive market, but only for English goods, to the detriment of home-made wares, which cannot compete with their rivals on equal terms; and this has caused severe distress among the artisan-classes of the country, especially because they cannot, on account of caste restrictions, as easily change their occupations as similar classes in other lands. This of course is not an unmitigated evil. The country has profited by the fall in the price of the wares. What can be had cheaper by importation ought, as a matter of course, to be acquired in that way. But it is not the less the duty of the government to find remunerative work for the people thereby brought to distress, and, if the English Government be honestly endeavouring to do so, as we sincerely believe it is, that is all the amends in its power to offer.

In every agricultural country there ought always to be food enough to support the people from one harvest to another. This is a principle of even greater moment than free trade aphorisms. England exports to India cotton fabrics, hardware, and manufactured commodities of various descriptions, creating demands which never existed, and receives in return indigo, cotton, jute, silk, rice, spices, and

many other natural productions. Now, though there can be no objection to the superfluities of the country being taken away from her in this manner, the natives object, and very naturally, to the necessaries of life being thus exported in immoderate quantities, whereby the power of the country to feed her own children is crippled. On the one hand all her money is taken out without adequate return, on the other, a large portion of her food-grains also. The increase in wages and the rise of prices for food-articles is the necessary consequence. The political economist considers both to be signs of national healthiness; but this is what the people will not understand. They feel that they are straitened, a clear proof to them that the productive power of the country, as yet developed, is unable to keep pace with her exports. This, as a matter of fact, is probably not the case, but their suspicions are confirmed by the frequent cries of scarcity and famine they hear around them; and the heartlessness of England in not regulating exports more judiciously is on that account bitterly complained of.

Another complaint equally bitter and oft repeated is, that English rule has closed all power and social distinction against the natives, save in exceptional instances. This, it is urged, was not so under the Mahomedans, who permitted the Hindus to rise to the highest offices of the State alongside of themselves. It is true that the Hindus who did rise in such manner had often, as we have noticed, to make peculiar sacrifices for their elevation: sometimes to give up their sisters or daughters to their sovereign, and at others to embrace his religion. But this is not very carefully remembered; and what is forcibly pointed out is that the fitness of the conquered for promotion was not questioned, while, under the English, the veteran subadár-major, who is often as efficient a soldier as the colonel of his regiment, is deemed to be unfit to hold the rank of a lieutenant.

With reference to this charge the natives have frequently been twitted by the remark that they ask for the highest

*civil* appointments under the government, but are content that the *military* appointments should be held by Englishmen. But the taunt is simply untrue. The natives ask most urgently and persistently for the highest military appointments—admission into the commissioned ranks of the army—for the sons of their rájáhs and zemindárs; they call for the opening of military schools for the education of all classes; they pray to be so trained that they may be able to defend themselves in case of need against foreign aggressors, and of real help to the English in the day of their trouble and tribulation. But they know that these demands will never be complied with by a foreign government naturally suspicious of the races it has brought under subjection; and it is for this reason, and this only, that their applications for civil appointments are so loudly and obstinately repeated.

In their own country the people of India are 'hewers of stone and drawers of water,' so to speak, while the servants of the State for all the higher grades are imported from England. This is a most serious charge, and for the simplest reason—that it is true. Without any particular qualifications beyond what are tested by some indiscriminate examinations, the country is flooded with foreign officers—civil, military, and medical—all endowed with the most absurdly-extravagant salaries, which are not liable to be curtailed for any amount of inefficiency, or to be stopped except for scandalous corruption. Could not these services be recruited and repaired from a purely Indian source? Put aside the exceptional cases of superlative ability, and then count the rest and conscientiously say if the officers picked up in England are really superior to their subordinates selected in India—men who have devoted their whole lives to the duties and professions they follow?

It is nothing to assert that splendid instances of administrative talent have been educed from the covenanted services of India. There is no doubt that statesmen and warriors, men of literature and science, have sprung up from among the administrators brought out from England.

But this is in the usual course of things. It has been correctly remarked, in answer to it, that if the inmates of a prison were thrown broadcast on the world, the result would be very nearly the same. India, as a conquered country, must naturally find employment for a considerable portion of England's middle and lower classes. She is doing so cheerfully; but that is no reason why the services should be all but nominally exclusive. The tendency of the age recommends a local selection of the best materials available for good government. It is absurd at this hour of the day to make England still the door through which the superior appointments are to be reached. It is not the native who should be made to repair to England, but the Englishman who should be made to visit India, preparatory to his selection as a governing agent. Services made up of the best procurable men in India, whether Hindus, East Indians, or Europeans, would be the best and fittest media for administering the country, the highest appointments only being, for obvious reasons, retained in English hands. Selections from the Uncovenanted Service for promotion to the Covenanted Branch have recently been sanctioned. But that does not meet the requirements of the case to any extent.*

It was correctly observed by Mr. Bright in the House of Commons some time ago, that the greatest danger to English rule in India was likely to arise from the coarse, rude, and dominant manner in which Englishmen generally behave in India. This is a crying evil, very much felt and very much complained of. Every Indian who visits England returns from it with the conviction that the Englishman in his own country is the best, kindest, and politest specimen of the human race; but every Hindu and Mahomedan in India finds him to be the worst, that is, the most insufferable,

* As these pages are passing through the press, we learn that it has been decided to throw open one-seventh of all new Civil Service appointments to the natives on the spot, on two-thirds of the emoluments allowed to European incumbents. The concession is not a bad one to begin with; but it remains yet to be seen in what spirit they will give effect to it.

being on the earth. Not only those in office, but even those who visit the country as adventurers, affect in their own persons all the conqueror's right. A white face, each thinks, gives him a patent of nobility, a patent to treat all who have the misfortune to be dark-visaged with supreme contempt. The moment he sees a man dressed in turban and shawl, with slippers on his feet, and moving with an un-English gait, he jumps at once to the conclusion that his visitor is either a *khitmutgár* or a Náná Saheb! 'A Hindu gentleman? What,' he asks in his arrogance, 'is a Hindu gentleman?' How many will accept the answer that in all respects, except pride and ill-temper, he is a better man than the Englishman as he usually figures in the East. Even when the Englishman affects to be kind, there is a superciliousness in his kindness that is more offensive than absolute aversion. Is this untrue? Sir George Campbell protested in Parliament against Mr. Bright's statement; but was the charge inapplicable to Sir George himself while he was in the Indian Service? Take up a file of any newspaper of the years during which Bengal had the misfortune to have him for her administrator, and whether the paper be English, Bengali, or Urdu, the evidence against the Lieutenant-Governor and his satellites will be found to be equally adverse. Class for class, the natives conduct themselves better, as regards the courtesies and amenities of life, than their conquerors; and it were very desirable indeed that Englishmen imitated them in this one respect.

These, however, are all the charges that can be advanced against the English in India, and as against a race of conquerors they are certainly not very telling. There is no doubt whatever that the Englishman has really at heart the good of the country into which he has forcibly intruded, and that he has all along been exerting to the best of his power to benefit it. The new industries which have been introduced into India are all creations of English enterprize and knowledge, and, what is more, are being worked out with English money. India is rich, but her rich men delight in houses, jewels, and luxuries; they have no capital

to speak of to invest in new works of usefulness. The indigo factories, tea gardens, irrigation works, and cotton and jute mills in the country, are all more or less worked with English money. Their immediate effect has been to impoverish certain classes of hereditary artisans who are unable to compete with machine-work. As the country borrows the capital employed, she has also, like all borrowers, to pay a ruinous interest. But, on the other hand, these industries find employment for a large number of labourers, which cannot but very beneficially affect their condition. They also hold out examples of profitable investment to native idlers, whose wealth is nominal so long as it remains unemployed and unproductive; and, if these can be induced to imitate the example set to them, the amount of good effected would not be inconsiderable. Some changes have been introduced in this way already. In Bombay the natives have set up their own cotton-mills on the English plan; and in Bengal they have substituted in their indigo factories vats, boilers, and strainers, in the place of earthen pots, cauldrons, and cloth-straining, with immense success.

The direct good of foreign capital is in the employment it gives to the labouring classes; and if it succeeds in time to detach a portion of the ryots from their infantile predilection for the soil, that will be another great gain to the country. Hitherto the poorer classes had no employment but tillage, the competition for which was necessarily crowded, and the profits inconsiderable. This accounts more fully for the poverty of the people than, perhaps, anything else. Of course, tillage with better implements will materially improve the ryot's condition; the products of a country with such a soil, such splendid rivers, and such varieties of climate, can never be non-paying when properly utilized. But the withdrawal of some portion of the people from purely agricultural work is, nevertheless, desirable, and it is high time for the mechanical arts to be better cultivated. Naturally, the Hindus are not inferior to the general run of European nations in mechanical industry.

The delicacy and fineness of Indian muslins has long been appreciated, which is attributable, not simply to hand-spinning, but also to the persistence and patient industry of the artisan. Silk manufacture, manufacture of gold and silver brocade, and gold workmanship of various kinds, have also been favourite arts, in which considerable proficiency has always been shown. The number and excellence of the Indian dyes is likewise well known, their superiority consisting not only in lustre and beauty, but also in their permanence. But the branches in which superiority has been thus attained are few; more diversified employment in mechanical works is needed to extend the usefulness of the poor in every direction: and this English enterprize and English example will best facilitate and advance. At present the national manufactures are all in their decline, the necessary consequence of English competition and English refinement. But, if strenuous endeavour be made, they can yet be revived and set up on an improved model; and, the machinery of England introduced, the cheapness of Indian labour will always leave a great share of advantage with the children of the soil. India is already one of the greatest agricultural countries in the world. There is no reason why she should not also be one of the greatest manufacturing agencies in it.

The hut of the cottier is very wretched, and has been remarked as such from the remotest times; the furniture of the hut is poor, and has been so for ages; the dress of its inmates is scanty, and has never been cared for; their mode of life is inexpensive, because they are always in want. How is this general state of depression to be remedied? Not by laws and enactments, but by the introduction of those arts and manufactural improvements on which we see the greatness of other countries to be based. English commerce has been largely extended, but the advantages derived from it have the drawbacks to which we have referred. The benefits will be better balanced when the manufacturing skill and knowledge of England are borrowed and imitated. On that skill and knowledge

the real elevation of the country will, in the long-run, mainly depend. With them will be gradually drafted the civilisation of Europe, and, if anything can do it, that may in time educate the masses better and more effectually than books and school-masters, and create a spirit of independence and self-reliance in themselves, on which both their social and political elevation may be founded. It is the native, however, who must be encouraged to work out this change. Left entirely in English hands, the enterprize is apt to lead to a yet further drain of money out of the country in the shape of home-remittances.

England trades with India as with the world, but not exactly on the same terms, for her trade with India is unrestricted. The gain to her from this source is immense, as it has enabled her to create a demand for the products of Liverpool and Manchester, and then to glut the markets called forth with them. But this is one side of the picture only, for the trade of the country is not confined to what it buys, but comprises also what it sells, and the best interests of England are necessarily allied with the full development of the internal resources of her dependency. The ancient trade of India was confined to the luxuries of life, such as shawls, muslins, spices, and precious metals and stones. The trade which has now been evoked embraces such necessaries as rice, pulses, linseed, cotton, and the like. The people of the country object, as we have stated, to these latter being taken away from them to the extent to which they are exported, but only from a fear lest their own requirements should be lost sight of. England, however, wants the articles, and will have them. She has, in fact, become largely dependent on India for them; and on her, therefore, devolves the duty of further developing the resources of the country, which would give her what she wants without creating any hardship in the producing territory itself. That India can produce all the necessaries of life to a much greater extent than she does at present need not be doubted; but England alone is able to establish the fact, and should do it in her own interests. 'Don't take

away all our food-grains from us,' say the natives to her, 'till you have helped us to produce more, both for your use and our own. Give us the assistance of your knowledge, energy, and enterprize, and, without robbing us of what we cannot spare, take away as much of the surplus as you like.' Dare England refuse to listen to such an appeal?

The connection of India with England has been undoubtedly very beneficial to both countries, and not less to the first than to the second, though the full benefit to be derived reciprocally has yet to come. It is the interest of India that this benefit should be large on both sides, for it is to her advantage that she remain under the ægis of English protection for at least a hundred years longer. But many hopes and aspirations have been awakened among the subject race by English civilisation, and the demand to satisfy these has become urgent. No cause for disaffection has yet arisen, but there is no question that there has been considerable misunderstanding on both sides. This is mainly owing to the wants of the people not having been properly understood, to the absence of any media for representing them to the ruling power. It is pretended that India is represented in Parliament, because there are members of Parliament who take an especial interest in Indian affairs. It may as well be contended that China is represented in Parliament, for some members of it certainly take great interest in Chinese affairs. India is *not* represented in Parliament, and never can be till *native* members are admitted into it—namely, members from Calcuttá, Madrás, Bombay, Álláhábád, and the Punjáb; and the prospects of India will not be thoroughly hopeful till such representation is permitted. Whether it be trade that requires to be regulated, or the industries to be encouraged, or the official stable to be thoroughly scoured, the controlling force must be correctly directed, and can be so directed by native representation alone.

The other immediate wants of the country have been

referred to by us in a previous work,* and need not be here recapitulated. It is sufficient to state again that more roads and irrigation works are urgently required, and more schools for a wider diffusion of education among all classes. On these requirements being fully met, India, we hopefully expect, will not be found to be much behindhand in her condition to any third-rate state in Europe, and in strength will probably be quite equal to any second-rate power.

* *Bengal*, chapter ix.

# INDEX.

# MINOR ESSAYS

# TAXATION IN INDIA.*

(REPRINTED FROM *Fraser's Magazine* FOR SEPTEMBER, 1876.)

WE are not Russophobists. We do not think that Russia has an eye on India, or that, if she had, she would have any chance of wresting it from British hands. But our impression is that the Indian Mutiny of 1857 was mainly caused by the instigation of Russian spies, and was practicable only on account of the bad estimation in which the British Government was then, as it is yet, held by the natives for divers reasons, one of the most prominent of them being the irritating system of taxation which it has enforced.

Of course, a civilised government like that of the English in India requires large expenses to uphold it, particularly as the administration is that of foreigners. This may be fully admitted; but it does not follow that the need of consolidating the empire, and of gaining the good-will of the governed, is, on that account, to be ignored. Without such consolidation and good-will no foreign hold on the country, however vigorous, can be permanently secure; and for them considerable concessions ought to be made, not only to the just demands, but even to the prejudices of the people. This, since the Queen of Great Britain has assumed the title of Empress of Hindustán, ought to be very clearly understood.

* ***Budget of India, for*** **1876-77 ; *The Indian Tariff Act of* 1875 ; *Reports of Taxation in India,* 1872 ; *Peasantry of Bengal,* by Romesh Chunder Dutt, B.C.S. and Barrister-at-Law, 1874, Chapter VII., 'Taxation.'**

One of the prejudices referred to is the objection of the people to direct taxation, except of such sort as they have been long accustomed to. They will not willingly have any other, and none other ought to be heedlessly enforced on them. The principles of economic science, if really antagonistic to indirect taxes, must here yield to much higher considerations. It is the bounden duty of the rulers of the country to endeavour to carry the people they govern with them; and to do this they must go with the people a great way where it is possible to do so without imperilling their own interests. They must not force on the governed their own ideas and innovations merely because they deem these to be right *per se*, and have seen them successfully carried out in their own country. They must remember that in India they have to deal with a very different country and a very different people from their own, whose wants they are bound to understand, and whose wishes they cannot constantly neglect without giving rise to disaffection. The natives are naturally suspicious of their foreign rulers, and entertain vague apprehensions of their motives; and these suspicions and apprehensions have to be allayed. To go against the current under such circumstances is neither consistent with wisdom nor with prudence, and cannot but render the task of governing unnecessarily difficult. The breach between the governors and the governed is wide enough already, and ought not to be allowed to widen further, if that can be prevented. It is not the visit of the Heir-Apparent to the country, or even that of the Empress herself, if she choose to come hither, that will smooth down difficulties of this nature. The art of governing the people must be better learnt.

It is not mere grumbling that has to be dealt with. Of course every man grumbles to pay a tax, and the grumbling is all the greater when the tax happens to be an unusual one. But matters in India have become more serious than that. There are unmistakable signs of discontent throughout the country; certainly not all of them attributable to

taxation alone, but there is no doubt that taxation is largely complained of by all classes. *Political* discontent does not exist anywhere except among ruined princes and their immediate followers; the work of pacification and consolidation is a comparatively easy one if the rulers of the country will only condescend to feel their way at every forward step they take. The go-ahead efforts of the British Administration have been gigantic, but without any adequate results. What the country wants is rest.

The different forms of revenue derived from the people are distinguished in the Indian Budgets as Imperial, Provincial, Local, and Municipal. The people, of course, do not care for these distinctions; they are to them utterly unmeaning and arbitrary. A tax is a tax to the payer by whatever name it may be called: and the impression all over the country is that all the forms of taxation in vogue have been overdone; that a vast amount of money is raised and spent which might well be saved; and that the real reason for the division of taxation under different heads is to draw off attention from the enormous sum-total that is realized and squandered. The general resources of the country, it is true, have not been overburdened; the limits of taxation have certainly not been crossed: nor do the people ignore the advantages of roads, railways, canals, education, and the police, on which all the sums raised are expended. But the fact remains that the one unanimous opinion all over the country is that a much smaller amount of money than what is now raised, would fully suffice to secure all the benefits and advantages that the British Government has yet conferred on it; and it is mainly the obnoxious manner in which its rulers have gone about their work that has led to this conviction, and to the exhibition of discontent which it has produced. The question in the mouths of both the governors and the governed is now identical: 'How and where is all this to end?'

Let us now review the different sources of revenue separately.

The Imperial sources of revenue are estimated in the

Budget statements for 1876-77 to yield the following amounts:

| | |
|---|---|
| Land-Revenue . . . | £21,381,000 |
| Customs . . . . | 2,620,000 |
| Salt . . . . . | 6,300,000 |
| Opium . . . . . | 8,200,000 |
| Excise . . . . . | 2,525,000 |
| Stamps . . . . . | 2,837,000 |
| All other items . . . | 6,617,000 |
| | £50,480,000 |

The first of these items hardly calls for any remark. The land-revenue is the most ancient and staple form of taxation known to India, and no Asiatic will ever question the justice of raising it, and nowhere has the slightest difficulty been experienced at any time in collecting it. It is stationary in Bengal on account of the perpetual settlement, but in the other provinces exhibits a perceptible increase at each successive resettlement, so that this, the mainstay of the Government income, is also the soundest to the core. But it is necessarily inelastic, except to an inconsiderable extent, as nearly one-fifth of it has been permanently fixed, while the remainder is fixed generally for long intervals—in most places for thirty years. The Budget says that it 'grows slowly but surely;' but we must not forget that it may at any time be adversely affected by unfavourable seasons, so that even such increase as it has exhibited after intervals cannot always be counted upon. It is clear that, as a whole, it will not admit of further expansion.

The second item, customs, may be assumed to be more elastic, since the duties, both import and export, can be considerably raised without perceptibly affecting the interests of commerce. But there has been such an amount of blundering here of late that the prospects for many years to come are far from hopeful. By the Tariff Act of 1875 all export duties on articles of native produce have been abolished, except those on indigo, paddy, rice, and lac, which remain unchanged. We would not quarrel

with this procedure in the abstract, since the duties taken off have always been condemned by economists; but we hold that that condemnation is not very particularly applicable to the present position of India, the total exports of which are, at this moment, enormously in excess of her total imports, which simply means that the country is being drained of its resources without adequate return, solely for the benefit of the foreign speculator. The dutiable exports before the revision of the tariffs included wheat, pulse, and oil-seeds, which are now free. Is it, we ask, for the benefit of the country that these particular articles have been released? Will not their release increase yet more the distance between the imports and exports which has already become so oppressive to her? If the duties on wheat, pulse, and oil-seeds were wrong, how can those on rice and paddy be right? The European exporter holds it to be opposed to the principles of political economy to raise any export duty on these articles at all, since such duty virtually amounts to the impoverishment of the grower for the benefit of the local consumer, the effect of which must, he thinks, be injurious to the country by checking the growth of a surplus stock. But is there no force in the argument of the local consumer that in a country like India, where the surplus cultivation of one province is often required to meet the necessities of another, an unchecked export of the necessaries of life is apt to lead to fearful results; that the dearness of food-grains in the country means the increase of crime; that if the duty affects adversely the cultivator and the tradesman, that does not make it more objectionable than various other social and commercial arrangements which similarly affect private interests to an equal extent; and that what really contracts the growth of the article is not the export duty, but the encouragement held out by the Government and the European speculator respectively to the cultivation of opium and jute?

We do not contest the theory of the thing at all. The teachings of the political economist must, as general prin-

ciples, be both judicious and correct; but we contend that practically the export of food-grains from so anomalous a country as India does most assuredly require to be checked. The foreign trade in rice in particular has attained fearful dimensions, and is the main cause of the remarkable rise of prices in the country, which within the last twenty years has reached the alarming proportion of fifty per cent., an increase which has filled every thinking mind in it with dismay. The income of the ryot has doubtless also improved within the same period, but not in the same, or nearly the same, proportion; and it is still generally so small that in several places the ryot is not able, even in the most prosperous seasons, to secure for himself and his family a sufficiency of food. The retention of a surplus stock on the spot is therefore a peremptory need; and a Government that is so careful to accumulate a reserve stock of opium, to be independent of the variations of the seasons, ought not to be less heedful of the fluctuations of the rice market, which carry desolation to many a poor man's door. The export duty on rice now is three annas, or about 4½d. per maund, and, instead of this being taken off, as has been strenuously urged, it ought, in our estimation, to be considerably increased. As a source of revenue it is elastic, and therefore all the more valuable to the Government. It is a duty moreover which is paid by the foreign consumer, and not felt in the producing country. The export flourishes notwithstanding the duty it now bears; and we know for certain that the cultivation in all places from which exports are made, that is, in Bengal, Madrás, and British Burmáh, has been steadily increasing year by year. The export trade in the article has, in fact, become almost illimitable, and holds out all the encouragement its cultivation requires. Were the whole country sown with rice only, the entire produce would hardly suffice to meet the foreign demand for it, but for the duty now levied on it. It is that duty, in fact, that has kept down prices to their present limit, which is still felt to be oppressively high. Were the duty doubled, the growth of

a surplus stock would not yet be affected, but a part of the surplus grown would be made available to the poor, which it is not at this moment.

At the same time that the other export duties were abolished, the general rate of import duties was reduced from 7½ to 5 per cent., ostensibly in the interests of trade and commerce, but in reality to increase the profits of the European speculator. But that did not satisfy Manchester, simply because the cotton duties were not simultaneously abandoned, while a duty of 5 per cent. was imposed on the import of long-stapled cotton, which was before untaxed. Was not Manchester unreasonable in the complaints she made? Yes; very unreasonable indeed, it appeared to us. In theory, the abolition of all import duties would, no doubt, be a very good thing for all parties concerned; but how, with such concessions, is the financial equilibrium of the Government to be maintained? The gain to the finances of the country from the cotton duties amounts to about £900,000 a year. How is the loss of that sum to be recouped? Manchester disclaims antagonism to the interests of India; but, when she contends for a concession of this stamp, well knowing that there are absolutely no sources to recover the loss from but direct taxes, which are sure to be bitterly felt and complained of by the people, she virtually does seem to demand that her own benefit should be regarded as of paramount importance. Our suggestion is that the import duties, far from being surrendered, should be largely increased long before the salt-tax is enhanced or an income-tax reimposed. It is simply absurd that one of the most legitimate and productive sources of revenue should be regulated, not by the position of the Indian Government, or the wishes of the Indian people, but by the eagerness of English tradesmen to increase their profits. It is not true that the existing duties operate as a check on the consumption of British-made articles in India. With or without that duty those articles will always retain the foremost place in the Indian market which they have secured, so long as there is no effective competition with them

in the country. In the port of Calcutta alone the value of the import of cotton goods has in twenty years increased from two-and-a-half to eight-and-a-quarter millions, which is the average of the last four years. What more does Manchester want? The reduction of revenue under this head, which is anticipated in the Budget, will simply represent the loss sustained by the abolition and reduction of duties which have been carried out; and it is only to be hoped that, with this loss staring us in the face, the cotton duties will not yet be remitted, for all the obstinate pressure of Lord Salisbury, till the finances of the country have been thoroughly regulated and allow of the simultaneous abolition of all customs duties without the imposition of new and unpopular taxes.*

The opinions entertained of the salt-tax are very conflicting. In times past the Government maintained a salt monopoly which has long been abolished. The manufacture of the article is now open to all, and, as a matter of fact, has become exceedingly limited. Almost all the salt required for consumption at the present day is sea-imported; and on both the import and the manufacture the Government realizes a duty which differs at different places. The rate in Bengal is Rs. 3/4 per maund; but in other parts of India it is only R. 1/13, and in some places still less. The necessity for maintaining these different rates arises from the belief that, the soil of some districts being more saline than that of others, it would give rise to much smuggling and illicit manufacture in the former if the rates were equalized. In some places there are mountains of salt, and in others there are salt lakes; and it is held that in such places the duties ought necessarily to be much less than where the facilities for smuggling are not great. But the difference in taxation has created many evils which are much complained of, and of these not the least is the maintenance of a preventive line to keep out

* Manchester was too strong, and the import duties on cotton have since had to be abandoned.

the low-taxed salt, both of the British districts and of the native states, from places which now consume the full-taxed salt. The presence of a large establishment of inquisitorial *chaprássies* (constables) throughout the whole length of this line is, as a matter of course, annoying and distasteful to the people, and the wish to abolish it is general. But its abolition can only be carried out under especial arrangements with the native states and by an equalization of duties all over British India.* Great difference of opinion, however, exists as to the shape this equalization should take; while one party would reduce the duty to the minimum rate, the other would increase it to the rate paid in Bengal.

To reduce the rate now anywhere would, it appears to us, be a very grave blunder, which would at the same time create a large deficit in the Government revenue that could not otherwise be made up. To raise it is, we think, quite feasible, since the higher rate now imposed has nowhere been complained of as exorbitant. There is no doubt that the tax affects the poorer classes especially, that is, almost equally with the higher classes; but there is as little doubt also that, such as it is at this moment, it is not felt even by the very poorest classes as a grievance, and would continue to be unfelt even if it were somewhat augmented. It is doubtful if the poor are cognizant at all of the existence of the duty; and it is certain that they would not be likely to know or feel it painfully, even after an equalization of rates at the maximum, which in no place would be out of proportion to the general rise in prices of other food-articles, and could not under any circumstances press on the people a twentieth part as oppressively as the slightest rise in the price of food-grains. The wages of the labouring classes are nearly double now what they were twenty years ago; they also find remunerative employment at present with greater ease, and often at their own doors;

* Since this article was written, the first steps have already been taken towards an equalization of duties and the abolition of the preventive line.

no one is therefore exactly in the position he was in when he commenced to pay the present salt-rate, and it may safely be assumed for these reasons that an additional duty would not be anywhere actually felt as a hardship. It is certain that it would not affect prices to any inconvenient extent, and it may even be hoped that it would be more than recouped by a further rise in the wages of labour. The fears of increasing disaffection among the mass by the adoption of a higher salt-duty are, therefore, purely chimerical.

It is of course wrong on principle to increase a tax levied on one of the necessaries of life. But that is a book-theory not applicable to India at this moment. If the country is to be governed by book-theories, even the lowest rate of salt-duty ought to be abandoned, and the people made happy by their salt being made tax-free. The *bonâ fide* cost of the article is nothing; if the duty were removed the price of salt would be nominal even to the poorest peasant. But the charge to him on that account is so inconsiderable at present that it is doubtful if he would appreciate a concession which, in reducing it yet further, would not very materially lessen the sum-total of his expenses. No one has ever taken exception to the tax as it stands but the European grievance-mongers in the country; no one entertains fear of a rebellion if the rate be raised to its maximum except some old-wife member of the Board of Revenue, or some left-behind secretary to the Government. Is the Government to abandon or reduce the rate of an indirect tax so contentedly borne by all classes to humour the crotchets or apprehensions of a few of its covenanted imbeciles and European detractors? Of course the poorer classes ought not to be taxed, if that can be avoided; but, in point of fact, it is not possible to avoid taxing them in common with others, as taxes will diffuse themselves over the whole population, however they may be distributed by law. This particular tax the poorer classes, though paying it equally with the rich, do not feel or complain of. As a rule they do not stint the use of salt

themselves on account of it; in several places they mix it even with the fodder of their cattle. It is true that it is nowhere cheap enough to be used as manure; but there need be no great hurry to cheapen it on that account only. All that may be conceded therefore is, that the salt-duty should not be increased beyond the Bengal rate, except under more imperative need than has yet arisen.

If the rate be uniformly raised to the maximum now levied, a slight diminution in the consumption of tax-paying salt in certain localities may be expected. But the question is whether that diminution, as a revenue difficulty, will not be more than covered by the expenses saved. The equalization of duties throughout India means the saving of the whole expense of the customs line, and that in itself would be a very great gain. As for the moral evil, illicit sales and smuggling exist now, and would exist then, where they were not preventable by the ordinary police. The beauty of the salt-tax is that it is very elastic, and, when it has been equalized in all places, will admit of being raised or lowered according to the necessities of the Government. Under ordinary circumstances we would not interfere with the tax after it has been once equalized. If the state of the finances admits of it, we would even prefer its general reduction; but we would not at the same time hesitate to raise it on pressure to an inconsiderable extent. A slight enhancement of it is not likely to reduce consumption much; it will certainly not give rise to any complaint or disaffection; and there is no doubt whatever that it will better replenish the coffers of the State than any direct tax which could be imposed.

The character of the opium-revenue is unique. It is almost entirely realized from foreign consumers, is exceedingly precarious, and may fail at any time. If we strike the item out of account, the deficiency to recoup becomes very great; and yet this may be the position of the Government in the long-run, for the Chinese are increasing their cultivation and also improving its quality. It is very

fortunate that they are passionately fond of the Indian variety of the drug; but when the growth in China is fairly established, this partiality for it may not continue, and then the Indian opium-revenue, if it does not vanish altogether, will most assuredly be considerably reduced. Besides that, the question has been raised whether the British Government ought to continue to supply the Chinese with the drug. For our part, we should for various reasons prefer to see opium-culture in India altogether abandoned; and if rice were substituted for the poppy, there would certainly be no loss to the cultivators. How the loss to the Government is to be made up is a more serious question. We should endeavour to secure that end by remodelling the sources of revenue already available to the Government, instead of casting about for novel sources, if that can be avoided. The State already gets everything that it is entitled to on account of land-revenue; but the customs, salt, and excise duties will bear further strain on them without breaking. When cobbling in this way is still found insufficient to cover the loss, recourse might be had to indirect taxation, or such direct taxation as the people may least object to. We shall come to the consideration of this point in due course.

The excise-rates are not anywhere felt to be very heavy, and the consumption of spirits is encouraged by their moderation. The increase of these rates all over the country is practicable, and the natives generally are strongly of opinion that they ought on principle to be prohibitive, as they were under both the Hindu and Mahomedan Governments. The vice of drunkenness has been most alarmingly increasing in the country since the introduction of British rule in it. Of course the raising of the excise-duties would necessitate the raising of the import duties on foreign liquor, as otherwise the result would be to displace native liquor for European; and it is here that the shoe really pinches, for the Europeans in India, and possibly the higher classes of the natives also, are apt to object strenuously to any check being placed on the admission of

European liquors into the country. But objections of this sort are not entitled to much consideration. By the tariffs of 1875 the import duty on spirits has been raised from Rs. 3 to 4 per gallon, and on sparkling-wines from Rs. 1½ to 2½. The complaints this gave rise to have subsided already, and, what is more, there has been no falling off in import, European liquors being to India what opium is to China—things to be had at any price. The Budget shows that the increase in revenue in 1875-76 amounted to £117,000, and estimates a further increase of £35,000 in 1876-77.

The stamp-tax all over the country is very heavy; but it is not much objected to, because in its grosser forms it is not of frequent recurrence. It has, however, been so augmented already that it does not admit of further expansion, though it can be safely relied upon for the amount it yields at this moment. The Budget says that 'every effort will be made to render this branch of the revenue, which suffers to some extent from fraud and evasion, more effective.' We trust it will not be forgotten that vexatious persecutions are not likely to do much towards making a tax of this nature more productive.

All the *bonâ fide* sources of imperial revenue under the heads referred to have been already well pumped. We have indicated in what way, and to what extent, some of them may be pressed yet further, in case of need; but we do not necessarily admit that there is any occasion for applying such pressure to them at present. The collections now made ought, if properly economized, to provide for all the necessities of the State; but unfortunately the men who raise the revenue have also the pleasure of spending it, and do so in the most reckless manner imaginable, returning with fresh zest to the pumping process to which they are so partial. We shall now turn to the expenditure side of the account to see what is done with the money collected.

The annual expenditure of India is estimated in the Budget for 1876-77 as under:

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|---|---|
| Army . . . . . . . | £15,979,000 |
| Public Works, Ordinary . . . | 2,532,000 |
| Do. Extraordinary . . . . | 3,759,000 |
| Interest on Debt . . . . | 5,360,000 |
| Guaranteed Interest on Railways . | 1,260,000 |
| Allowances under Treaties and Agreements | 1,696,000 |
| Superannuation and other Allowances | 1,796,000 |
| Administration . . . . | 1,595,000 |
| Law and Justice . . . . | 2,367,000 |
| Land Revenue . . . . . | 2,473,000 |
| Opium . . . . . . . | 2,200,000 |
| Allotments for Provincial Services . | 5,060,000 |
| All other Items . . . . | 8,018,000 |
| | £54,095,000 |

The total shown above exceeds the total estimated income by £3,615,000, but by deducting the item of £3,759,000 proposed to be spent on Extraordinary Public Works, the total ordinary expenditure is reduced to £50,336,000, or barely within the income expected to be realized, the surplus exhibited being £144,000 only. This surely is an exceedingly unsatisfactory estimate, considering the magnitude and richness of the dependency concerned, particularly when we are expressly told in the Budget 'that the sources of imperial income are (now) in a sound condition, and, indeed, that they never gave better promise of prosperity.' If this be the result to be expected from the most satisfactory state of the finances, what will be the position of the Government, what the condition of the people, when the ground is less sure and stable? We do not forget the item of loss anticipated by exchange, which eats up so much of what might otherwise have been saved; but losses of some kind or other are always occurring to reduce the surplus, now in the shape of exchange, at other times in that of famine-charges, or the Hazárá campaign, or the Looshái expedition. We must reckon such contingencies, therefore, as annual and recurring; and we hold that the position of the Government ought to be better than it is, in spite of them.

The reproductive public works the Government had

hitherto held itself free to construct from borrowed capital. To this there could have been no objection if the works so called were really 'reproductive;' but this they are not, and we therefore hail with satisfaction the announcement now made that for the future all borrowing for public works is, if possible, to be stopped, nothing being undertaken but what can be paid for out of the taxes. This has been forced on the Government by the state of the money-market and the course of exchange referred to. We shall not notice those subjects here; but, apart from the complications created by them, there was no justification for the Government to go on contracting debts of enormous magnitude for works which were not really remunerative —which, as a rule, do not promise ever to be so. Reproductive works! Which of the works undertaken by the Government can be truthfully so called? The Budget refers, under this head, first, to the State railways, which, apart from their general usefulness, are expected to yield in 1876-77 a net return of £118,000, but the expenses on which to the close of that year will amount to no less than £14,933,926, which scarcely gives a profit of one per cent.; and next, to the irrigation works carried on in the different provinces, of which those in the North-Western Provinces, the Punjáb, and Bengal only are expected to yield a direct net profit of about 2½ per cent., and an indirect profit of 1½ per cent., that is, a total profit of 4 per cent., in a country where the usual yield of investments is estimated at 12 per cent. Why such works are called 'reproductive' we do not understand. If A borrows £100 at 4 per cent. interest (and the Budget shows that the average rate paid by the Indian Government is slightly more, or 4·33 per cent.), and if he lays out the sum so that £50 yields a profit of 2½+1½ per cent., and the remaining £50 either less profit or none at all, does he regard his business to be 'reproductive' for the questionable profit it yields? Why works of such character should ever have been carried on with borrowed capital is a puzzle to us. 'Say no more of

reproduction, and do not hamper us with further debts,' was naturally the protest of every intelligent native at this juggling, and we are heartily glad to learn that the juggling is henceforth to cease. The Government of Lord Northbrook has acted very judiciously indeed in taking advantage of the first decent pretext to put a stop to such enormous and inconsiderate waste. Of course by so doing it raised a nest of hornets, for the loss in perquisites to many adventurers will be very great; but the financiering in itself is not only clever, but absolutely correct.

These so-called 'reproductive' works are set down in the Budget as 'Public Works *Extraordinary*.' This description of them may be very comprehensive and accurate, but is evidently not sufficiently distinct. From such little knowledge as we have of the matter, we may safely say that all the public works undertaken in India are, in a sense, 'extraordinary'; for even the most expensive ones—those which it may be presumed are completed with the greatest care and under the most efficient professional supervision—are always pronounced, after the lapse of a few years—five, ten, or fifteen at the outside—to be breaking down, unsuited, or otherwise unfit for use; and what makes the matter still more 'extraordinary' is that the responsibility for this can never be carried home to any highly paid official of the department; there is never any one to punish for it but some poor native, who is always forthcoming in the character of scapegoat.

Even in India itself the question has often been discussed whether the financial equilibrium of the State should not be secured by a reduction of its expenditure. The available resources of the country at present are ascertained. No private establishment with a stationary or slowly expanding income launches out beyond its depths in the ocean of extravagance; and why should a foreign Government among a helpless people attempt to do so? If the present spendthrift course is long continued, where will the Government land itself in twenty years to come?

Where will it land the people committed to its care? The increase of expenditure in the country has been progressing everywhere at a very fast rate, at a rate which its finances have never justified; and even now every new scheme is devised on the most expensive scale. The money thus wasted can and ought to be saved. The Government of the East India Company was very careful in its disbursements; why should the Imperial Government be otherwise? The creation of new departments day by day is now considered by almost all the subordinate Governments, and by the Supreme Government itself, as an inevitable need, whereas a judicious economy would condense instead of multiplying useless offices, maintained for purely imaginary purposes. The end held in view by every Government, and especially by the Government of India, should be to effect by reductions—and we maintain that wholesale reductions are here possible—a surplus revenue of at least a tenth part of the gross income realized year by year; not to pay off its debts—for the debts of the Government of India are not very large, and to the extent that the natives are the lenders (25 per cent. only), form so much substantial security for their faithfulness—but to establish its solvency and relieve the subject races of their fear of indefinite further taxation. This would unquestionably make British rule in the country much safer than it can be said to be at this moment. What is always wanted is the exercise of a sound judgment and a powerful will for controlling the purse, and never was there greater need for this in India than now.

The Government of India must make both ends meet, and this can only be most effectually achieved by reducing expenditure. Civilians always suggest the reduction of the army expenditure to begin with; but we do not agree with them, if they mean a reduction of the force. The item is undoubtedly extravagantly high, absorbing almost four-fifths of the whole of the gross revenue derived from land; and there is no doubt that it is possible to reduce it by more economical management. As now constituted

the army is said to be over-officered,* and the supply of recruits under the military system of the Horse Guards costs, it has been shown, much more than it ought. Besides this, it has become the fashion of the Home Government to saddle India with many charges not legitimately her own, which might in common honesty be withdrawn from the Indian accounts; and the amalgamation of the three distinct armies of Bengal, Madrás, and Bombay would effect a further saving, one important item of which would consist of the salaries of two of the commanders-in-chief. We would, however, on no account reduce the actual strength of the army by a single man. If the Russians advance further towards Afghánistán it may even be necessary to increase it largely. Imperial taxation is paid for general protection; and, of the appliances by which that protection is assured, the army is the most important. Our impression is that, at this moment, the English army in India is the most efficient army in Asia; and this position it must always retain. We therefore look for little if any saving of expenditure under this head. Whatever amount may be economized by reorganization will probably have to be laid out for such further expansion of strength as may be called for, and we would not stint such expansion on any account.

The second head, Public Works, is the great leak by which the wealth of the Government is squandered. It is responsible here, not for mismanagement only, but actually for criminal waste. In India this is called the 'fortune-making' department. Fancy the *ordinary* annual expenditure on public works of a comparatively poor country exceeding the cost of administration by nearly a million pounds, while the *extraordinary* works cost nearly two-and-a-half times as much. If an honest endeavour is to be made to secure accordance of ways and means, the *ordinary* public works expenditure of India ought never

* A German regiment of 3000 men has 72 officers only, while a fighting strength of 3000 English soldiers, which is equal to five battalions, has so many as 125 officers.

to be allowed to exceed the cost of its administration till the advent of the millennium, or that wished-for occasion when the cash balances may become oppressively overflowing. Every one knows that roads must be maintained, canals dredged, and barracks and public offices kept in repair; but the Government should confine itself exclusively to such works, to works of absolute necessity, till the surplus in its hands justifies it in entertaining new and expensive schemes. So far as the feelings of the people on the subject are concerned, they do not want any additional roads, and they abhor to be harassed with additional taxes or additional debts. The work has been overdone even so far as it has been really effected; but what makes the cost of public works so enormous is not the actual value of the works completed, but the extravagance with which the money is misspent. This is notorious all over India. It is asserted here that public works' officers retire from the country with larger fortunes than members of the Civil Service, even than lieutenant-governors of provinces. It is not satisfactory even to suspect that large sums of money—about four millions sterling a year—should be spent on the plea that the greatest amount of good was being done to the country, when in reality half of the amount was being actually thrown away.

The expenditure under the head of Administration is not very high; but there is still much waste of money on this account which might be economized. Mr. Fawcett has pointed out that the presidencies of Madrás and Bombay can be as well administered by lieutenant-governors as the Punjáb, the North-Western Provinces, and Bengal. If this suggestion were carried out, the saving of expenditure would be very large, and would almost render unnecessary any further savings under this and other similar headings for some time to come. There is in each presidency again considerable waste on new schemes, which may be stopped at once. Why have so many large departments been created for the collection of statistics,

etc.? This surely is an extravagance that could well have been avoided. We do not object to statistics; they are very valuable when of the right sort: but we do object to more being made of them than they are really worth. Besides that, all the statistics now collected by special departments could have been just as well collected and consolidated without the intervention of such departments, by ordering the district officers to exhibit in precise and regular forms the information which they furnish. Then again, why are so many civilians sent out to the country year by year, when those in it complain so loudly of stagnant promotion? Why are the natives not more largely utilized for administrative purposes? Here the will only is wanting. We see that the country is not rich enough to pay for large establishments and exorbitantly-paid officials, and yet the Government goes on increasing those establishments, and obtaining recruits for the service in hordes from the dearest of all markets, the English market.

Under Law and Justice we would make no reductions, for imperial taxation is well spent when spent in dispensing justice evenly among all classes; and this remark would apply to the police with equal force, except that the present administration of the police is unusually costly, and there is no reason why it should not be as efficient at less expense. For one thing, the police returns published are generally far too voluminous for any useful purpose, and the efficiency of the department would not suffer if they were curtailed and the expenditure proportionately reduced. The number of the working men of the police will perhaps not admit of being lessened; but the staff of superior officers is very large, and the consequence is the compilation of a great number of unnecessary reports and returns. Such savings it is true would, after all, be very petty; but the husbanding of even crumbs is not to be despised.

For revenue administration there are two offices of control in Bengal and elsewhere, namely, those of the Commissioner and the Board of Revenue, both of which cannot

possibly be required. The question of abolishing one or the other has long been under discussion; but nothing has been done, for the simple reason that the clipping scissors, if exercised, would lop off some of the best prizes of the Civil Service. And yet there is no doubt that a thorough revision of the system would not only economize money, but also economize labour. The same work is now gone over twice, in two distinct offices, which would be at least as well done by being done once, and in one office. If the Board were abolished, as was long contemplated, and the Commissioners vested with greater authority, work would be done more expeditiously and efficiently, the district officers would be kept under better control, and the Government itself be more quickly and more thoroughly informed of everything going on in the country.

We only indicate the direction in which economy might be effected, without attempting to give details in regard to such reductions; but what we more especially recommend is, not the abolition of individual appointments, but a wholesale reorganization of civil salaries, by the more extensive utilization of native ability, which can be effected without sacrifice of efficiency, and which, under the present state of the finances, should, we think, be earnestly attempted. The first duty of the English Government in India is towards India herself, and we are justified in calling upon it now to rise superior to such prejudices as have hitherto actuated it in reserving all the loaves and fishes of the country for English mouths.

We now come to the Provincial Services system, or the Decentralization scheme of Lord Mayo, which has given rise to all the new taxes now in force. Before 1871-2 the control of the purse was vested entirely in the Government of India, no local Government being allowed to incur any expenditure, on any account whatever, without superior sanction. By the formation of the Provincial Services the Government of India divested itself of the administration of certain departments of the public service—namely, jails, registration, police, education, medical services (exclusive

of medical establishments), printing, roads, public improvements, civil buildings, etc.—all of which were transferred to the local Governments, together with the usual receipts derived from them, *minus* a deduction of about seven per cent. kept back as a relief to the imperial finances. The assignments thus made were to cover all the expenses of the departments concerned; but, as the grants were admittedly inadequate, the local Governments were simultaneously empowered to supplement their resources by local taxation. The whole scheme, therefore, was simply a sham, devised expressly for the purpose of making up the deficiency of income under certain heads by provincial taxation. An affectation of honesty was exhibited by enjoining economy under one head to meet excess expenditure under another; but, of course, with the power of local taxation conceded to them, no conscientious attempt to this end was made by any of the local Governments, while by most of them taxes of different shape and character were at once resorted to.

As a matter of fact, local taxation has thus become more important than imperial taxation, not as a source of income, but as a hotbed of disaffection, giving birth to noxious exhalations which are suffocating loyalty. The number of new taxes thus inaugurated is as yet not very large, but their names and character differ so as to be perplexing; and, as the charges of the departments transferred to the local Governments are yearly increasing, the taxes must go on increasing in number and amount to keep pace with the demand for more assets year by year—a very disheartening prospect to look at, considering the feeling of disquietude and alarm they have already evoked. It may be conceded that all the imposts raised are honestly expended for the improvement of the condition of the people. But it is too early to expect that they will acquiesce in their imposition simply on that account. It is doubtful if they want their condition to be improved; certainly they do not want it to be improved at greater cost to themselves than they have been accustomed to.

In Bengal the only local tax newly introduced is the Road-Cess, imposed for the improvement of roads and waterways. This, with such taxation as existed before in the shape of tolls on roads and ferries, and with the profits of jail manufactures, and the surplus produce of pounds, has, up to the present time, covered all the expenditure of the departments transferred, though how long it will continue to do so is of course problematical. The question of an education-cess was discussed along with that of the road-cess, but has been held in abeyance for the present. The road-cess is imposed on a valuation of land, at a maximum of half an anna on the rupee of net profits realized, one-half of the rate being paid by the occupier or ryot, and the other half by the rent-owner or zemindár. This is only the theory of the tax. It was originally intended to exempt the ryot altogether from paying any part of it; but it was understood that, if this were done, the burden was still apt to fall on him eventually whoever might be made legally responsible for it, and that it would therefore be better to define by law his exact liability. A little more judgment and discretion on the part of the law-makers would have enabled them to discern that, defined or undefined, the ryot's liability was sure to be extended so as to cover the whole tax; and actually, besides his own half-rate, he has to make good to the zemindár the latter's share also, and, very conveniently, the zemindár has been made the collector of the ryot's share. While this adjustment was doubtful, the zemindár objected to the cess tooth and nail, as an infringement of the Permanent Settlement. But to this he was reconciled the moment he discovered that the burden could be shifted to other shoulders. This, of course, led to the subsidence of the agitation made against it at the outset, which has been triumphantly held up by the Government as a clear proof that the agitation was a fictitious one, and the fears of disaffection to which it referred entirely illusory. Is it possible that the Government is really ignorant that the whole of the tax, and in some places a trifle in excess of it, is now, usually, levied by the zemindár from the ryot, and that there

is no continuous cry against it only because its present victims are dumb? Sir Richard Temple in his last Administration Report says that the ryots do not object to pay the cess-rate. We deliberately state against this assertion that they do object; they only make no complaints because they think, and correctly, that complaining would augment their difficulties. To the zemindár the road-cess has been a windfall —a means of increasing his income and extending his power. To the ryot it is downright oppression; but who is he to complain to—who will listen to his complaints? Roads! good roads! The country does require them, of course; by all means have them—as many as you can. But why should not the imperial revenue pay for them, as it did in the past? Why should the ryot, to whom fish and milk are luxuries rarely attainable even on holidays, pay for a road which he at least, habituated to wade through mud and dust, does not stand in need of? If there be any disaffection against the Government in the quietest province of India, it is solely attributable to the Road-Cess Act, the gain per contra from which is represented by an income that at its maximum will amount to about £300,000.

In the North-Western Provinces local taxation exists in the shape of rates and cesses, and an acreage tax levied on all cultivated lands situated in permanently settled districts. They are all of them very unpopular, as being in excess of the Government demands defined and limited either for good or for a fixed term of years. The local authorities represent the exception taken to them as being merely theoretical, and their imposition as unoppressive. But, oppressive or unoppressive, they are complained of as a grievance; and it is this feeling of disaffection that has to be guarded against. The same is the case in Oude, where all the local rates are regarded as breaches of faith with the zemindárs, because departing from the terms of settlement agreed upon with them. In the Central Provinces there is what is called a Pandhri Tax, a provincial income-tax which only exempts incomes derived from agriculture. This, which was originally imposed by the

Mahrattás, has been continued by the British Government. It is as unsuitable as the income-tax, has nothing whatever to justify its continuance, but is nevertheless continued because the receipts from it are considerable.

Of the local taxes in Madrás, the Land-Cess and the Village-Service-Cess are those most complained of, both as enhancements of the land-tax. The first is raised for roads and other local purposes, at the rate of nine pies per rupee of land-assessment, while the second is levied at the rate of one anna per rupee of land-assessment, in commutation of the ancient customary fees paid in grain and money for the remuneration of village establishments. They are both of them very paying; but the ill-feeling engendered by them is also great. In Bombay a provincial income-tax was introduced, which was called the Non-Agricultural Tax. It reached even incomes of five pounds, and was levied from certain non-agricultural classes, which, it was considered, did not contribute their fair share towards the expenses of the State. But it was found to be so oppressive in its operation, that even the officers of the Government were found averse to enforce it; and this led to its being suspended in 1872-3, since when it has not been revived.

We have only named the local taxes introduced under the Provincial Service Scheme. Besides them there are, of course, others of older date, existing in the shape of tolls, rates, port-dues, etc., raised in particular localities for their especial benefit. These, though they may have been irritating in the past, are not much objected to now, the people having become gradually accustomed to them. What they object to is the number of these customary dues being augmented by the imposition of new taxes which were not known either under the Hindu and Mahomedan Governments, or in the days of the Company's *ráj*. If the present Government understood its work better, it would expand the existing systems of tolls and other dues all over the country, and even increase their

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rates, instead of endeavouring to impose new burdens which cannot but stagger the half-educated mind.

The last general head of Indian taxation is Municipal, which comprises taxes on houses, octroi duties, license fees, and a variety of miscellaneous receipts differing in name, character, and rate in different places, each of which is required to provide for some especial object within the municipality concerned, but which the rate-payer, as a rule, thinks ought to be paid for from the general revenues. The theory of the thing is that municipal administration is synonymous with self-government; that the municipality is required to meet certain charges for which it raises its own revenue; and that the fullest discretion being left to it for regulating the revenue to be raised, such taxation ought not to be distasteful. The principle inculcated is, of course, a wholesome one; but, viewed in connection with the actual state of things in the country, the lesson is but a blind. The people at present are not prepared for self-government, and in point of fact there is no self-government among them—except to a very partial extent in some of the more important metropolitan towns. In all other places the scheme works wholly as a sham, and is accepted by the people as such, having been set up, they say, for the express purpose of getting more money out of their pockets, on the pretence that they pay it of their own accord. Actually, they do not pay it willingly; they pay it simply at the dictation of the official members of the municipal committees, and this is very well known to the Government. Sir George Campbell, in his Taxation Report to the Government of India, mentioned it as a fact that the rate of municipal taxation was higher in those places where the non-official members took the largest share in the administration than where the municipality was mainly administered by the officers of the Government. The instances cited were those of Calcuttá, Howráh, and Dáccá; but he very well knew that in all those places the great bulk of the non-official members are merely cyphers, or, as they have since been named by the local

press, *áp-ké-wasta** members, having no opinion of their own apart from that of their president or leader. This can be recognised as 'self-government' only by giving that expression a very great latitude of meaning.

What this system of so-called self-government has led to is the imposition of a series of taxes, tolls, and imposts which were unknown before, and which every man—even every member of a municipal corporation—grumbles at. The visit of the tax-gatherer, which is irritating to all people in all places, is especially so in a country where till now it was unknown in its frequency. The Bengal Municipalities' Act has been paraded by its authors as the first instalment of self-government conceded to the people: but the people are not thankful for the concession; they smart under the exactions it has introduced; and, if the long list of possible taxes imposable at the discretion of the municipalities were known, the alarm would be yet greater for all the self-government implied by their existence. The question whether the concession of self-government or the fitness for it should precede is rather an awkward one to raise at this moment. A move in the right direction ought always to fructify; but to be in the right direction it ought to be right-timed.

The municipal taxation in Bengal is principally in the shape of a tax on houses and lands, though in particular places there are besides a wheel-tax, a water-tax, a police-rate, etc. In the North-Western Provinces, the Central Provinces, Oude, and the Punjáb, the form best known is the octroi, supplemented by police and other taxes which yield a comparatively inconsiderable amount. Madrás and Bombay again have rates of their own, of which, as in Bengal, the house-tax is the most important.

As a rule the house-tax is a very inequitable tax, particularly in India, where the size of a man's residence is not a correct indication of his means, and where accordingly the poor have often to pay more in proportion than the rich. It follows necessarily that this tax is very unpopular.

* That is, voting with the president or chairman.

The octroi duties work better wherever they are levied. The tax is an indirect one, imposed on articles of consumption, and realizes a large amount of revenue without the slightest interference with individuals. It has also the advantage of falling chiefly on the upper classes, being as a rule raised on articles of luxury, of which they are the largest consumers. The great objection to it is that it is apt to interfere with trade to some extent; and, where the through trade is large, it certainly does require to be very carefully handled. Its collection is also attended with some difficulty and expense, and, if the greatest precaution be not taken, may become vexatious. But there is no doubt that the feeling of the people is very much in its favour, and nothing could be substituted for it which would yield an equal income. Uniformity in taxation is also desirable if it can be easily secured; and, as the house-tax is everywhere grumbled at, its substitution by octroi duties all over the country—with this precaution only, that those duties do not take the form of transit duties—would not apparently be a retrograde move, since it would bring in more money with less of ill-will.

The improvements now being effected in the country are on a much larger scale than has ever been attempted before. As a matter of course, they require more money than was necessary in the past. The popular complaint is that much more money than is actually wanted is raised, that the value of the taxes levied is nowhere covered by the improvements effected, and that the best part of the money is wasted in fat salaries and misappropriations. This may or may not be so. It is certain that the demands for money in the future will not lessen, and it is therefore imperatively necessary that the most popular forms of taxation should be substituted for those which are unpopular. In places where there are no octroi duties at present, duties very similar to them (such as market dues and the like) are illegally levied by the zemindárs, and are ungrudgingly paid. The fact is, the people are accustomed to the payment of those duties, and give them

to whomsoever is able to demand them with an appearance of force. There seems therefore to be no reason whatever why they should not be legalized and levied on behalf of the Government or the municipalities, for being expended on local works.

The course to be followed if additional revenue be wanted has now to be considered. We, for our part, do not admit the necessity of raising any additional revenue; our conviction is firm that the great need of India now is economy in finance, that by tying up the purse-strings carefully all the real requirements of the country can be fully met. But, in the course of time, more money may be required for increasing the efficiency of the army; we do not know when the army may have to sustain the greatest strain upon it: and it certainly does behove the Government to be prepared for all contingencies. How then is a permanent surplus revenue in India to be secured—a surplus, as we have indicated already, of at least a tenth part of the gross receipts?

As matters now stand, the imperial taxes are nowhere complained of. Many of them, in fact, are not taxes at all in the proper sense of the word; and all of them are accepted by the people as legitimate dues fairly claimable by the sovereign power. The stamp duties perplex the mass; the system irritates as a bungle, that being the light in which it is regarded, but it leaves no lasting soreness behind it. Imperial taxation, the people understand, is levied for general protection; the protection afforded has been fully appreciated, and, if direct taxation of an unpalatable character be not resorted to, no methods for augmenting present income will cause any actual disaffection. Under all the heads except land-revenue, stamps, and opium, the income can be augmented to a considerable extent; it is not true to say that the imperial sources of revenue are all of them inelastic; the customs duties, both export and import, can on several goods be increased without detriment to commerce; the salt-tax can be raised at least to a uniform maximum rate without

oppression or discontent; the excise-revenue also admits of considerable expansion. But as there is, and may continue to be, much difference of opinion among experts on these points, it is necessary to suggest some new sources of revenue, to be used if the existing sources are not to be expanded. Hitherto such additional taxation has taken the shape of either an income-tax, a license-tax, or a certificate-tax; all having one distinct object in view, though with different names. On principle the income-tax is certainly the fairest; the injustice of all classes, rich and poor, being taxed alike is too manifest to be discussed; an income-tax, theoretically at least, affects the tax-payer only according to his means, which fulfils one of the conditions of a good tax. But being a direct tax of a very inquisitorial character it has been found to be excessively unsuited to the country, and ought therefore never to be resorted to again except under extraordinary pressure.

We all remember how bitter were the feelings excited on the first imposition of the income-tax. It was then both unjust and oppressive; the assessments were made arbitrarily and unmercifully, and were accompanied by intrusive proceedings which no amount of submissiveness could endure. These defects were subsequently rectified, the rate of taxation was reduced, and the pressure of it was further lightened by the minimum of assessable income being raised. But, even then, the tax did not become popular; and the reasons are obvious. Income-tax in a country where the majority have no accounts either of income or expenditure can lead to nothing but confusion, scandal, and discontent. The profits of the trading classes can never be ascertained; tradesmen in India will rather pay thrice the amounts claimable from them than show their books. Even the profits from the cultivation of the soil can only be approximately known. Some men were charged because they had no books to rebut the demands made against them; others, because the books produced by them were false. The inquiries in view of assessment

exposed them all, not only to the caprices of the subordinate officers of the Government, but also to the malignity of their personal enemies. This caused the tax to be absolutely detested. In its modified form, it did not press on the mass of the people, for the mass are poor. The agricultural classes were practically exempted by it altogether. The tax divested of its first irritating surroundings was mainly levied on the inhabitants of cities and the Government officials, so that when it ceased to be generally oppressive it ceased also to be remunerative. The produce of it was, in fact, so insignificant that the Government thought it not worth the ill-feeling it still created, and so it was abandoned, which was received as an act of relief all over the country.

That the rich ought to pay some especial tax is not disputed; though it is scarcely correct to say that they do not pay higher rates at present than the poor. They necessarily pay more taxes as purchasers and consumers of articles not used by the poor. But still the inequality of incidence is very great; and, if an especial tax capable of fair adjustment can be fixed upon, it ought to be imposed on them. But a general income-tax has not this character. It reaches the Government servants and the holders of Government-securities easily enough, but those are just the classes that ought not to be very closely pressed. Landed proprietors also are reached; but they shift their burdens mainly on their ryots, by saddling them with an additional cess which more than covers the rate which they have to pay themselves. But the mercantile classes, traders, bankers, and money-lenders—all the parties, in fact, whom it is most desirable to reach—evade it, either partially or wholly, with the greatest ease.

If, then, an especial tax be desirable, it should, we think, rather take the form of a capitation-tax than of an income-tax; and it might be regulated according to means and property by broad divisions laid down without inquisitorial inquiries. The great objection to a capitation-tax is, that it is the most direct of all taxes, being imposed, not on

the property, but on the person of the payer, which necessarily makes it unsound in principle, as pressing with equal rigour on the rich and the poor. But this objection is considerably obviated by our suggestion to regulate it according to means, in such manner as would leave no room for vague apprehensions, which would virtually convert it into an income-tax divested of its irksomeness. It is true that the poor would still have to pay a certain share; and there is no reason why they should not. They partake in all the advantages of police, sanitation, roads, schools, and dispensaries, with the rich; nay, may be said to reap the greater portion of those advantages, since the rich can and do secure a good share of them at their own cost without the assistance of the State, which the poor do not. It is certain that they will not object to pay their share when they find their betters making up by far the greater portion of the tax; and, as for the higher classes, we are confident that they will pay their quota willingly, for, in point of fact, the rich in India are not averse to pay fairly, according to their means. Money-lenders and usurers especially ought to be largely taxed under this head. In a country where any rate of interest is legal, they are entitled to no consideration, particularly as the police and the laws afford them the greatest protection, at the same time that their earnings are very easily secured. For the same reason the mercantile and trading classes should be made to pay a higher rate. It was with a view to reach hese grades that the income-tax was introduced; and, if the form be changed to a capitation-tax of varying rates, there would, we think, be no objection to pay almost any rate that might be asked. Our objection to direct taxes generally holds good; but this is one of those direct taxes which are in accordance with native notions, and, while fulfilling in a defective form the object of a license and certificate tax, it would leave no door open for extortion, as the rates to be realized under it would be exactly known. Landed profits are already taxed, and ought to be all but nominally exempted from its operation. Interest of capital

invested in Government-securities ought also to be as lightly taxed as possible. In former times such capital remained buried underground for fear of being taxed or appropriated by the State; and the Government of the present day should rather offer a premium for their employment now in the manner in which they are employed, than discourage such employment and force the adoption of the old methods of security. Assessments of income under the income-tax scheme were little better than guess-work, for all the irritating inquiries that preceded them. The different rates of capitation-tax should, therefore, be allotted simply according to prevalent opinions of means and property, without inquiries of any kind whatever. They might, we think, be fixed on some such scale as follows:

| | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ryots and menial servants per annum . | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Men of the 'Sircar' class and others of similar position . . . . . | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Gentry, 3rd class . . . . . | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| „ 2nd class . . . . . | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| „ 1st class . . . . . | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Money-lenders, bankers, and tradesmen, 3rd class | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| „ „ „ 2nd class | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| „ „ „ 1st class | 50 | 0 | 0 |
| Merchants and millionaires . . . | 100 | 0 | 0 |

Another suitable form of taxation for India would be to raise an income by taxing the luxuries of the people, which would not be felt by the payers, and would not perceptibly affect the poor. There is no doubt as to the correctness of the remark, that for every rupee taken from him directly the native of India would willingly pay two rupees taken indirectly, to avoid being interfered with. A tobacco-tax has long been talked of; but the Government that risked its good name and almost its very stability by the imposition of an income-tax, has not yet had the hardihood to impose what is sure to be willingly paid and to yield an enormous revenue. It is doubtless true that the poorer classes consume tobacco quite as much as the rich; but the

difficulty implied by the fact is easily obviated by imposing only a nominal tax on tobacco of the inferior sorts which are consumed by the poor. The higher classes do not use the same tobacco; they have peculiar preparations made for them to which only they are accustomed, and these might be heavily taxed without raising a single murmur, or being felt to be oppressive by any person. In the same manner a tax on *pán*, or betel-leaf, might be easily raised without giving offence, and, in this case also, as the leaves used are of different sorts, the rates might be so regulated as to fall more heavily on the rich than on the poor. None of the articles proposed to be thus taxed are necessaries of life in the same sense that salt is, and while there is a duty on salt there seems to be no reason why there should be no tax on them at all.'

As a *dernier ressort* the income-tax will still be available, but only for such occasions as a foreign invasion of the country, a general mutiny of the army like that of 1857, or any other great catastrophe of the kind that the Government may find it impossible easily to tide over. An income-tax, it must not be forgotten, taxes heavily all the educated and influential persons in the country, men who discuss the acts of the Government and form the public opinion of the people, such as it is at present. It of course does not press on the mass; but we must not lose sight of the fact that popular opinion in India is not the opinion of the mass, but of those comparatively few who from their wealth, position, or intelligence lead or influence the opinion of the mass. Such people, we hold, should not be taxed heedlessly, merely for the adjustment of ways and means. When there is real pressure they will not be unwilling to pay; but they will never pay extra rates willingly when there is none. The tax may be theoretically perfect; but, for all that, it has been eschewed by most nations even in Europe, and is imposed only under extreme necessity by some; and under no other circumstances should it be recalled into existence in India. If an income-tax is to be levied in time of peace, when the

country is in a prosperous condition, what tax is to be levied in times of war and distress? We make these remarks because the reimposition of the income-tax was suggested to Lord Salisbury by the Manchester deputation, and was also advocated by Sir H. Montgomery in his minute on Lord Salisbury's tariff despatch.

The ordinary tax-payer does not understand the distinction between provincial and local taxation. The object of both is to strengthen the hands of the local Governments, and enable them to undertake works which the imperial grants to them do not adequately provide for. Roads and local improvements must be made to keep pace with the requirements of the age. But the cesses which are now realized under different names in different provinces to provide for them are all equally regarded as breaches of faith on the part of the Government, as being virtually enhancements of the land-revenue, whether fixed permanently or for a term of years. We would therefore suggest all taxation of the sort being abandoned, and substituted by the adoption of other rates, which may admit of being raised in all places without being much complained of.

Every marriage in the country is the occasion of something being transferred from the pocket of the ryot to that of the zemindár. The zemindár's exaction is illegal, but not the less remunerative. Why may not the Government impose a marriage-tax? In a country that owns a population of two hundred millions there is no fear of such a tax operating as a check on it. Every one in the country thinks it incumbent on him to marry; and to every female marriage is held to be indispensable. Tax or no tax, marriages and giving away in marriage will go on at the same rate as at present. The marriage expenses amongst all classes are extravagant; and even a stiff tax would not be felt as a grievance, for it will not materially affect the expenditure. At all events, those who spend thousands and ten thousands on such occasions can well afford to pay a fee to the Government, and will never demur if

called upon to do so. The tax will be a direct one, it is true, but will not be objected to on that account, because it will not return periodically or at fixed seasons, which is the prime cause of soreness and anxiety. It would come seldom, and, what is more, only at times of rejoicing, when the native heart is unusually liberal.

Of course, we propose native marriages only being thus taxed; but no invidious distinction is implied. English marriages are not accompanied by ostentatious processions, illuminations, and street music; and, if the processions only are taxed, the rich natives will virtually have to pay the fairest share of the tax, and it is on them only that it should be imposed. In fact, all processions, whether marital or religious, might safely be taxed. In the processions themselves no religion is involved—the religious rites either precede or follow, and it is not proposed to tax them. When parties are so eager to throw away their money heedlessly, as these processions imply, there can be no objection to replenish the Government till with their superfluous silver. A tax on processions is now levied in particular places—as, for instance, in Calcuttá, where a fee is charged for every procession other than funeral and religious processions. The exemption of the latter we consider to be a mistake. If the tax be well regulated and extended all over the country, it is sure to yield a fair income. At any rate, it would well-nigh cover the amount now realized from the road and other cesses all over the country without creating the same amount of dissatisfaction. It is desirable also for other reasons. It may lead to the diminution of marriage and *poojáh* expenses, and make the natives more provident than they are at present.

On the same principle a tax on ostentatious *shráds*, or funeral ceremonies, in which the natives spend large sums of money, might likewise be very quietly raised; and these taxes might be further supplemented by a tax on artisans, which, however, ought not to be very inflexibly levied. The arts are yet in their infancy in the country, and therefore ought to have every indulgence and protection ex-

tended to them. But still, they have become fairly remunerative already, and can therefore afford to contribute something to the coffers of the State. The tax cannot press hard on the labourers themselves, because their labour being in great demand will always dictate its own wages.

The above taxes, judiciously regulated, ought fully to cover all the expenditure which the growing necessities of the country impose on the local Governments, and they will at the same time give a fixity of taxation, the want of which at present creates so much alarm. But with their imposition all irritating local rates and cesses should cease. They must not be imposed *in addition* to taxes which exist.

Last of all, the municipal incomes require to be strengthened. Here also uniformity is greatly needed. Taxes are levied in different places, under different local Acts, which vary in character to a most extraordinary extent. It is not necessary that such diversities should exist, for they perplex and annoy the people most unnecessarily. The house-tax is irritating in all places, and should be abandoned if it be practicable to do so; nor ought there to be any difficulty in abandoning it if the octroi duties can be more generally levied. All municipal taxes in India at least ought to be indirect, for it is these taxes that cause the greatest amount of irritation all over the country. Direct rates, whether on houses, lands, vehicles, or trades, have been received everywhere with groans; do away with them then without hesitation: octroi rates have nowhere been objected to; have them everywhere, and everything will go on smoothly. In Bengal there are no octroi duties at all, and yet there is no doubt, as we have said already, that duties very similar to them are illegally levied by the zemindárs; and administrators who are horrified at the idea of an increased salt-rate, which would only nominally affect even the poorest peasant, wink very conveniently at these exactions, which are often fifty and a hundred times greater in degree. An octroi-duty levied on all articles of luxury would be the

fairest taxation for municipal purposes throughout the land, and, we are certain, would not be unacceptable anywhere. Lord Lytton, in his reply to the Manchester deputation, spoke of the octroi as being 'objectionable in theory.' We trust that his lordship, while in India, will leave theory aside for the nonce, and inaugurate a government of practical usefulness.

The natives are opposed to all forms of direct taxation, and, if we have suggested the introduction of some at need, we have done so with the greatest reluctance and hesitation. Those who advocate their general adoption assert emphatically that it is time the natives should learn to appreciate them, since indirect taxation only means putting equally heavy burdens on the rich and poor. There are two fallacies involved in this opinion. The time has not arrived in India for the adoption of civilised forms of taxation, any more than the time has arrived for the general adoption of Christianity, or of English habits and manners; and it is incorrect to assume otherwise. The second fallacy consists in the assumed possibility of adopting any form of taxation that will not spread to the mass. Taxes always fall on those who cannot escape them. Impose them in any way you choose, and they will diffuse themselves over the whole population, including the poorer classes.

A large increase of taxation in any form is not feasible in India. Indirect taxes in the way we have represented may be raised by taxing articles of luxury, and even of general consumption—such as tobacco and *pán;* but the rates of such taxation must necessarily be low, that the poorer classes may not feel them to any extent. Such direct taxes also as are not generally objectionable may be imposed, but with the greatest caution, and provided always that the taxes now objected to are given up. Some wholesale financial change of this sort has become imperative. It is not creditable to the British administration that even in time of peace there is no surplus on the balance-sheet, but either a nominal or a fictitious one. If new taxes must be imposed to remedy the evil, they ought to

be imposed at once, but not in the bungling manner hitherto followed, and never without studying the wishes and even the prejudices of the people in respect to the form they should take. The plan followed in the matter up to this time has neither been wise nor honest. Even where the sham of self-government has been conceded, it is the Government members of the Committees who dictate the course to be followed, without any consideration for the feelings and prejudices of the people whom it most concerns. Local taxation means self-government; but what is self-government where the opinions and habits of the people are never consulted? It is no slur on a foreign Government that there have been mistakes and imperfections in regulating the finances of the country; but it is bound, at all events, honestly to try to rectify those mistakes. There are native financiers in the country, real statesmen and accountants, who will, without any difficulty, find out for the Government the arrangements which would best suit the tax-payers. The English Finance Minister can never become sufficiently acquainted with the habits, wishes, and wants of the people to do justice to this part of his duties. Why not say honestly to the natives, then: 'We must have so much money; it is absolutely necessary for carrying on our form of government properly; tell us how your people would wish to make up the amount?' The real wish of the English people—the people of England—is to do justice to India. This wish ought not to be allowed to be strangled by the governing class in India, who can consider no question apart from class interest, who in all their acts are assiduous to ignore the people of India. Once more we say, take the people honestly into your confidence, and they will cheerfully assist you out of your financial difficulties and blunderings. No man in India is unwilling to pay the fairest quota claimable from him for the stability and prosperity of the British Government in it; and of this the British Government itself ought to be well assured.

# THE INDIAN STATUTE BOOK.

## A RUNNING COMMENTARY.

THE Indian Statute Book contains much matter that ought to be both interesting and instructive to the general reader, and that is our only excuse for referring to it. It is not our purpose to review or criticise the laws of India at large, but only to draw attention to those which are most striking, peculiar, or important; and this character is borne by several of them. A reign of more than a hundred and twenty years has enabled the English in India to give to the country a legal collection of great worth; and if law-reading were pleasant, the Regulations and Acts passed by the Government would have counted many admirers. But, unfortunately, the case is otherwise, and the consequence is that the Indian Statute Book is never read, except by persons officially connected with the administration of the country. Dr. Hunter has given a short sketch of some of its contents from the pen of Mr. Fitzjames Stephen in the second volume of his *Life of Lord Mayo*, chapter viii. But that sketch is necessarily incomplete; and we would wish to remind our readers of many enactments not noticed therein, though we cannot be expected to do so in the luminous manner of Mr. Fitzjames Stephen.

There was no law-making in India under the Mahomedans, the principle followed by them in the adjudication of cases having been a very simple one. In all criminal cases the Mahomedan law was enforced; and the same practice was also followed in all civil cases where one of

the parties was a Mahomedan; while in cases where both parties were Hindus, and for which there was no especial provision, the trial was conducted under the Hindu law, as explained by Hindu law-officers or *pundits.* This system was subverted when the English came into power; and, if nothing else justified the acquisition of the country by them, that act did so, since it liberated the great bulk of the people from the injustice of having the laws and usages of a minority, no better educated than themselves, forced upon them.

The British Government commenced by accepting the principle that the laws should be adapted to the manners and comprehension of the people and the exigencies of the country governed, and that they should adhere as closely as possible to the usages and institutions best known to the multitude. The system first introduced was the laws of England for all British-born subjects, except in civil and fiscal cases, in which the Mahomedans were allowed the benefit of the Mahomedan laws and the Hindus the benefit of the Hindu laws; while, when the parties concerned were of different nationalities, the law administered was that of the defendant. The rights of the Hindus were thus expressly restored; but the Government at the same time reserved to itself the right of making such rules and regulations as might be deemed just and reasonable, and necessary for the good order and civil government of the country; and this reservation has been vindicated by the many laws that have since been enacted. The general result of the process has been that while the native laws—Hindu and Mahomedan—have been preserved so far as it was possible to do so, their character, where capricious, objectionable, or arbitrary, has been toned down and modified in accordance with the spirit of British legislation and the dictates of reason and common-sense. The actual position of the country at this moment as to the law that governs it is this: the English substantive law is the law in force within the local jurisdictions of the High Courts in Calcutta, Madrás, and Bombay; while in the

territories beyond those jurisdictions the substantive-law is the law of the Regulations and the Acts, and so much of the English law as is not inconsistent therewith. Apart from this, the customs and usages of the people have also the force of law as among the members of the different races respectively; while a large number of cases, not otherwise provided for, are decided in accordance with justice, equity, and good conscience.

The Dewánny was assumed by the British Government in 1765, and the administration of justice from 1772, the establishment of Supreme Courts in the Presidency towns being provided for by 13 George III., cap. 63, sec. 13. By sec. 36 of the same Act the Governor-General was empowered to make rules, ordinances, and regulations, both for the administration of justice and the collection of revenue: but the regulations made previous to 1793 were for the most part detached and desultory, laid down without any prescribed form or method; and, as several of them were not printed, the whole of them were not procurable in a collective shape.

Reg. XLI. of 1793 is entitled *A Regulation for forming into a Regular Code all Regulations enacted for the Internal Government of Bengal,* and forms the corner-stone of the system instituted for the general administration of the country. It prescribed for the first time that the regulations should be numbered and codified; and the code was commenced with the first regulation of the year. The first forty-eight regulations of the code were in fact all passed on one day, the 1st May, 1793, and inaugurated the administration of the Marquess of Cornwallis. The experience acquired by the English during the first twenty-eight years of their rule was thus consolidated and brought on record, and, the foundation of the code being laid, the laws were added to, extended, and modified with the acquisition of new provinces, to meet the growing requirements of the *ráj.* The advance was made step by step, as fresh territories were obtained, or as fresh difficulties came to be encountered; each provision of the law was called

forth to meet a new want as it arose; no law was made till it was distinctly perceived to be necessary.

The Bengal code was commenced in 1793, and was followed by the Bombay code, which began with 1799. But all the regulations of the Bombay code issued prior to January, 1827, were repealed by Reg. I. of that year, and hence that code is much smaller in size than the Madrás code, which was commenced in 1802. In 1803 the system was extended to the North-Western Provinces; and subsequently to the yet more recent acquisitions of the empire. The first duty of the sovereign in every civilised state is to protect society from violence and invasion by other societies; and the next to it, which is almost equally important, is to protect every member of society from injustice and oppression. The object of all the codes enacted was to secure this latter end, and it may safely be held that from the very outset the English in India have evinced every desire to discharge both duties well.

The Charter Act of 1833 (3 and 4 William IV. cap. 85) extended the Company's Government to the end of April, 1854, and for the first time empowered the Governor-General in Council to make *laws* for India, as distinguished from rules, ordinances, and regulations, to which his power had till then been restricted. The laws to be enacted under this provision were to have the same force as Acts of Parliament; but it was expressly stated that the right of Parliament to legislate for India was not thereby abandoned. Before this time the Governor-General in Council had no power to legislate for all India; but now, for the first time, the local Governments were deprived of their authority to make laws for themselves, and were only allowed to propose drafts of laws to the Governor-General in Council for sanction. The whole legislative power in India was thus centralized with a view to obviate confusion and contradiction in legislation, which had already crept in; and so matters stood till 1853, when complaints arose from the subordinate Governments that their wants and necessities were often overlooked. This led to the appointment in

the Governor-General's Council of members from different parts of India as official representatives of the Governments which selected them; but the difficulties complained of by those Governments were not thereby wholly removed. They still contended for independent legislative power, representing themselves as best able to deal with local questions and departmental entanglements; and the power so persistently asked for was at last conferred on the three Governments of Bengal, Madrás, and Bombay by 24 and 25 Victoria, cap. 67, in 1861. The constitution of the Governor-General's Council was at the same time altered, a number of non-official members being added to the official element, ostensibly for the purpose of representing the people. Hence the two systems now in operation, *i.e.*, the Governor-General's Council for making general laws, and the local councils for making laws to meet local wants and difficulties in each of the three larger sub-divisions of the Empire.

The leading divisions of the laws enacted are as under:

1. Revenue laws.
2. Judicial laws.
3. Police and Municipal laws.

The Revenue laws are those enacted for the settlement and collection of the different branches of public revenue, for defining the powers and duties of the officers employed in the Revenue Department, for securing the rights and tenures of the proprietors and tenants of land respectively, for enabling landholders and farmers to realize their rents with punctuality, and generally for all objects connected with the administration of the land-revenue and the land tenures and rents of the country. The Judicial laws are divided into civil and criminal, enacted respectively for the administration of civil and criminal justice. The Police and Municipal laws relate to the preservation of the public peace, and the management of local affairs. Apart from these are the 'social,' 'commercial,' 'literary,' and 'miscellaneous' laws, all of which may in fact be grouped under one general head—'Miscellaneous' or 'Variorum'

—to include every enactment not comprised in any of the preceding sub-divisions.

The revenue laws are by far the most numerous, and of these the first and most important is the opening enactment of the Bengal code, namely, Reg. I. of 1793, by which the revenue of Bengal was permanently settled. The decennial settlement, upon which this permanent arrangement was based, was concluded under orders passed in 1789 and 1790, and the Government of the day found it so much to its advantage, that it lost no time in making it perpetual. This course has of late years been very sharply condemned; but there is not much reason to doubt that, at the time it was adopted, it was held by the most competent authorities to be the best that could have been conceived. By it, the right of ownership to the soil, which had belonged to the sovereign, was resigned in favour of persons through whom the collections on behalf of the Government were made. The idea of Lord Cornwallis, in making this concession, was to convert the collectors into a body resembling the landed gentry in England, to secure which end a written and uniform rule was introduced, by which several customary but unwritten rights were seemingly ridden over. The law says, that the result expected by the Government was that the zemindárs would exert themselves in improving their lands under the certainty that they would enjoy exclusively and for ever the fruits of their own good management and industry; but this expectation was certainly never realized, as the zemindárs as a body, far from exerting themselves towards the improvement of their lands, simply left everything to the chapter of accidents. It is not true, however, to say that the ryots were tied hand and foot and reduced to slavery. There was no overt act at all to harm them. They were nowhere before, and were still left unrecognised. A new element was introduced in their relations with the zemindárs, but it did not in point of fact disturb the position of nothingness they had hitherto occupied. The Government, far from being careless of them, appears to have remem-

bered them when nobody else, not even they themselves, did so. The power 'to enact such regulations as may be necessary for the welfare of the dependent tálookdárs, ryots, and other cultivators of the soil,' was expressly reserved.

The defect of the permanent settlement was that the proprietary right in the land, which, in a country like India, should never have belonged to any but the sovereign power, was given up by the Government to its agents and collectors. The Government did not betray the ryots into the hands of the zemindárs; but the zemindárs twisted the concession made to them into an engine of oppression. There was a constant struggle between the zemindárs and the ryots to evade the responsibilities devolving on each party by the arrangement, and this eventually compelled the Government to interfere, and exercise the power it had reserved to legislate further on behalf of the ryots. Act X. of 1859, or the first Rent Law, had nothing in it that was absolutely new, except the occupancy clause. In all other respects it was simply a recast in a modern shape of what was acknowledged and acted upon as law before, and which the zemindárs had attempted to ride over. It reiterated and codified the principles already well known, and attempered them to the arrangement the Government had sanctioned. These principles were set forth by it as follows: (1) That rent for holdings held from the permanent settlement cannot be increased, and that whenever it is proved that the rent has not been changed for a period of twenty years, it shall be presumed that the rent has been held from the time of the permanent settlement; (2) that possession of twelve years gives a right of occupancy, which means that the tenant having such right cannot be evicted as long as he pays a fair and equitable rent; and (3) that a right of occupancy being conceded, it was necessary that the zemindár should have the power of enhancing the rents, as otherwise the right-of-occupancy ryots would virtually become peasant-proprietors, at a low quit-rent, to prevent which the law provided how the rent was to be enhanced, and the remedy left to the ryot against over-enhancement.

The interference of the Government in this matter was perhaps a strange and anomalous proceeding; no Government has any right to interfere in property rights to the extent the Indian Rent Law does. But the Government had made the first mistake in conceding proprietary rights to the zemindárs, and was bound to rectify it to the best of its power. It had besides expressly held out a protective pledge to the ryots which was part and parcel of the perpetual settlement, and which it was bound to redeem; and no one can say that it has not fully redeemed the promise that was made. The law of landlord and tenant is now as perfect as, with a permanent settlement, it was possible to make it. Act X. of 1859 was amended, so far as it related to Bengal, by Act. VI. (B. C.) of 1862, and, so far as it related to the North-Western Provinces, by Act XIV. of 1863. The latest Bengal Act is VIII. (B. C.) of 1869 —the *Landlord and Tenant's Procedure Act*—sec. 18 of which re-enacts the provision of the law of 1859 that 'no ryot having a right of occupancy shall be liable to an enhancement of the rent previously paid by him, except on some of the following grounds, namely, (1) that the rate of rent paid by such ryot is below the prevailing rate in places adjacent; (2) that the value of the productive powers of the land has been increased otherwise than by the agency or at the expense of the ryot; and (3) that the quantity of the land held by the ryot has been proved by measurement to be greater than the quantity for which rent has been previously paid by him.' No law could have made clearer and more stringent rules for the protection of the ryot. It is, in fact, now contended that the provisions of the Act bear harder on the zemindár than on the ryot, as the onus of proof in every case referred to in the section quoted rests with the former. That it does so is, however, absolutely right. If the zemindár claims enhancement, it is very proper that he should be required to establish the grounds on which he does claim it. Unfortunately the second of the enhancement clauses is not very definite, and involves requisitions which cannot

be clearly argued or contested in a court of justice. Measures are now under consideration for obviating this and other difficulties which have arisen; and, if the task can be achieved to the common satisfaction of the conflicting parties concerned, nothing will contribute more to the material prosperity of the country, and the social and moral improvement of the people.

With the concessions made to the zemindárs by Reg. I. of 1793 was coupled a homily for their edification, which ran as follows: 'To discharge the revenues at stipulated periods without delay or evasion, and to conduct themselves with good faith and moderation towards their dependent tálookdárs and ryots are duties at all times indispensably required from the proprietors of land; and a strict observance of these duties is now more than ever incumbent on them.' But the Government did not confine itself to lectures only; nor would mere lectures have sufficed. Reg. XIV. of 1793 was the first law passed to enforce the punctual collection of revenue, the latest law on the subject being Act XI. of 1859, known as the Sale Law, amended, so far as Bengal is concerned, by Acts III. (B. C.) of 1862 and VII. (B. C.) of 1868. The revenue of Bengal is paid by four quarterly payments; the days of payment are fixed, and every zemindár is informed of them. Within the time fixed the instalments due must be paid; and, in case of failure, the estate reverts to the Government, and is sold to the highest bidder. The law is very stringent, and instances have occurred in which whole estates have been sold for less than a twentieth part of their value. But the revenue being ultimately fixed, it was not much the Government asked that it should be punctually paid.

The Government not permitting any delay in the payment of the revenue receivable by it from the zemindárs, justice required that the zemindárs should have the means of levying their rents and revenues with facility, and to this end Reg. XVII. of 1793 was passed, the provisions of which were re-enacted, with alterations and amendments, in the Rent Law of 1859. The main law reforms under the head

of 'Land-Revenue' have thus consisted of provisions for making landed property more valuable and secure, and for supplying the omissions of the permanent settlement. As to the lands which do not come under the operation of that settlement, namely, the lands held *khás* by the Government, the principle followed is very simple and easy, and has not needed legislative interference to any noticeable extent. No Government estate is now permanently settled, but the settlements are ordinarily made for long periods—mostly for thirty years. In the settlement great care is taken to ascertain, record, and protect the various interests in the land; and, where possible, it is usually concluded with residents, that is, with the ryots or their representatives. The most important fact to remember, however, is this: that the rates are increased at every resettlement, as much as the lands will bear; so that the ryots on the Government estates cannot be said to be better off than those who suffer under the zemindárs.

Besides the laws above noticed there are more than fifty enactments on land-revenue subjects, which are all of considerable importance, but which it is not possible for us to cite particularly, in an article of less than as many pages; and we are thus obliged to overlook the Butwárráh laws, the settlement laws of the North-Western Provinces, the Dearáh laws, and the Lákhiráj Resumption laws, the last of which gave rise at one time to much annoying investigation and oppression.

We step over now to the other branches of revenue distinct from that derived from the land. The realization of customs duties was first referred to in a Resolution of the Governor-General in Council, dated 23rd March, 1773, in which it was stated that 'every article of foreign or inland trade, except salt, betel-nut, and tobacco' (which were separately taxed), 'shall pay a duty to the Government.' This principle was amplified into several regulations from 1795 to 1806, the whole of which were again recast and substituted by Reg. IX. of 1810. By the rules previously in force a number of taxes were imposed, which necessarily

made the operation very oppressive and harassing; and the main object of the amended regulation was to simplify the process by the imposition of a single tax in place of many. All previous transit, import, and export duties were accordingly abolished by it, and a new list promulgated, enumerating the articles on which duties were to be levied, and prescribing the rates for each. 'The business of customs,' as the collection of the revenue was called, was at this time divided into two parts, namely, (1) town duties, levied on all imports by sea and on gruff articles imported by land, whether for consumption or subsequent export; and (2) Government customs, levied on all goods imported or exported, whether by land or water. The law was considerably modified by subsequent enactments, namely, Acts XIV. of 1836, I. of 1838, VI. of 1844, etc. The principal change effected by the first-mentioned Act was the abolition of the transit, town, and inland customs duties altogether in Bengal. This change was experimental; but, on its utility being established, the transit duties in Bombay and Madrás were successively abolished in 1838 and 1844. For sea-customs the latest consolidated law is Act VIII. of 1878, which, besides laying down the procedure to be followed in importation and exportation, and the manner in which the duties thereon are to be levied, regulates the coasting trade, which, in course of time, has become very important. The Tariffs prescribing the duties to be imposed are separately enacted, and are changed according to the requirements and necessities of the hour, and the fluctuations in the value of the articles imported and exported. Besides these duties some land-customs are also collected on foreign frontiers by various enactments; but the yield from this source is very inconsiderable.

Another source of revenue is the duty on salt. It was asserted by Clive that the salt-trade of Bengal had been a monopoly from time immemorial, and must ever be a monopoly. The first enactments to secure the monopoly were Regs. XXIX. and XXX. of 1793, which were

re-enacted with alterations and amendments by Reg. X. of 1819. The subsequent changes of the law were numerous, till, contrary to the prediction of Clive, the Government abandoned the manufacture of salt from 1862, the supply being left to the ordinary course of trade. At present any one can manufacture or import the article, the profit of the Government being limited to the levy of a duty on it, whether manufactured or imported. This duty is so regulated as to be equal in both cases. Of course smuggling would make the Government a loser, and was accordingly strictly guarded against by Act XIII. of 1849, particularly smuggling to Calcuttá, the chief emporium of the salt-trade. The latest consolidated Salt Act for Bengal is VII. (B. C.) of 1864; for the North-Western Provinces, Punjáb, Oude, and the Central Provinces, Act XXV. of 1869; and for Madrás and Bombay, Act XXIV. of 1869. Almost the entire consumption of the country is now limited to imported salt. This is strange, considering that the trade is free. That foreign salt is yet able to compete with home manufacture does not speak much in favour of enterprize in India. The grievance-mongers, both in India and England, are constantly pressing for the removal of the Government duty, and there is no doubt that free salt would be a desirable concession to the people. But the concession can never be safely made till the finances of India are better regulated than at present, to effect which the people are even willing that the salt-tax should be increased.

Opium, which produces such an enormous revenue, of course received the earliest attention of the Government. The monopoly was originally assumed in Behár, in 1773; but the first law for regulating the manufacture and sale of the article was not passed till twenty-two years after, being Reg. XXXII. of 1795, which was amplified by Reg. VI. of 1799, when agencies for securing the drug were established in Bengal, Behár, Orissa, and Benáres. The entire law was re-enacted by Reg. XIII. of 1816, which reduced into one regulation all the rules then in

force on the subject. The poppy is grown for the Government in certain districts only, and, though the area has been much enlarged of late, the law of watch and ward is the same everywhere, and very simple in character. The general consolidated Act is XIII. of 1857, which has been recently supplemented by Act I. of 1878.

The above Acts relate to the monopoly system, and comprise what is called the Bengal law on the subject. The system elsewhere levies the revenue by a duty on export, and varies considerably in different places. A bill is under consideration in the Governor-General's Council for consolidating all the rules relating to these diverse practices throughout India, which, on being passed, will give one law to all India in respect to the duty-paying system. The Bengal law has been much objected to of late, with reference to its moral aspect; but it cannot be modified without considerable financial loss to the Government.

The old regulations frequently speak of Sayer and Market dues, which were resumed from the zemindárs in 1790, and subsequently abolished. With their abolition a tax was imposed on liquors and drugs, which was the first Ábkáree tax under the English administration. The plea for the tax then, as now, was to check the immoderate use of the articles taxed; though the real reason has been at all times to find compensation for deficiency of general revenue. The first Ábkáree law was Reg. XXXIV. of 1793, which was followed by many others, till all the enactments were reduced into one law by Reg. X. of 1813. The Acts now in force are: for Calcuttá especially, XI. of 1849; for all Bengal, XXI. of 1856 and XXIII. of 1860; for Madrás, XIX. of 1852; and for Bombay, XVII. of 1859 and IX. (Bom. C.) of 1867. Everywhere the main object held in view is to derive as much revenue as possible from the consumption of liquors and drugs, and actually that consumption is unchecked. An inquiry was made by the Government as to whether the increase of revenue derived from this source did or did not imply

increase of drunkenness, and it was authoritatively announced that, though the rates of duty had been nearly doubled, the increase in receipts did not come up to more than 38 per cent., which indicated that the consumption had actually diminished. We must not forget, however that the natives of all but the lowest classes have contracted of late an especial penchant for European liquors, and that the consumption of country liquors and drugs would have come down yet more if the duties were still further increased. If the decrease in the consumption of country spirits had been equal to the increase in the consumption of English spirits, then only could the Government have properly asserted that the Ábkáree system was not to blame. But does the case actually so stand? The consumption of country spirits and drugs has decreased; but the consumption of English spirits has increased in much greater degree. The charge against the Government is that it prevents by its system the consumption of country spirits and drugs from disappearing altogether, or assuming very inconsiderable proportions, as would be the case if the Government duties were prohibitive.

The original law for levying a stamp-duty was Reg. VI. of 1797, the object held in view being to provide for the deficiency in the revenue caused by the abolition of the police tax. In modifying the rates of duty afterwards, the opportunity was taken to revise the law, which was consolidated by Reg. X. of 1829. It was further supplemented and amended by several Acts passed in 1858, and then altogether recast, first, by Acts XXXVI. of 1860, and X. of 1862, and, again, by Act XVIII. of 1869, which was known as the first General Stamp Act for all India, and which has since been substituted by Act I. of 1879. The tax is not unpopular at present, but they are trying hard to make it so, by increasing the stringency of the law at every new re-enactment.

A further stamp enactment is the Court Fees' Act—VII. of 1870—which fixed the fees leviable on suits, etc., in

the civil and criminal courts, to be collected by stamps. This law was passed on the system of collecting the fees in money being found to be practically inconvenient, as involving much uncertainty and delay in their realization, and entailing the necessity of keeping complicated accounts. These inconveniences have now been obviated, and the law has in other respects also been found to be eminently successful and judicious. Perhaps the only objection to it is that it has rendered litigation somewhat easier, at the same time that it has increased the resources of the Government. But the people of India are not naturally litigious, though that charge has often been advanced against them; and the facilities given by the Act were not uncalled for.

The laws for the administration of justice, civil and criminal, are scattered over several volumes of the Regulations and Acts, and are obscured by several other volumes called 'Constructions,' and 'Circular Orders,' to all of which it cannot be necessary to refer. Among those which are most important are: (1) the Civil Procedure Code, (2) the Penal Code, and (3) the Criminal Procedure Code; and, after them, the laws relating to evidence, trial by jury, oaths and declarations, the recording of decisions by the judges in their own vernacular, and the establishment of the small cause courts.

The Civil Procedure Code was originally prepared by the Indian Law Commissioners in London, for all civil courts in India; but the Indian Legislature restricted its application, in the first instance, to the Mofussil courts only. The basis of civil procedure in India before this time was Reg. III. of 1793, which was followed by several other Regulations and Acts, by which a series of bungling and conflicting practices were introduced. It would have been useless to attempt to link and reconcile these together; the gordian knot was, therefore, cut through by Act VIII. of 1859, by which all the old enactments were virtually wound up, while a new and simpler form of procedure was prescribed, which relieved the people entirely from dependence on technical skill and memory.

Not only was all uncertainty as to the proper rule of practice removed, but many original and wholesome provisions were added, which gave to the law a distinctive feature; while several provisions of the old regulations which had become obsolete were re-enacted in it in simpler form. The whole object held in view was to simplify procedure to the greatest extent possible, and enact it in its completest details; and it may safely be asserted that this object was almost fully attained. The law has since been amended and reproduced as Act X. of 1877. Its provisions were extended to the courts established by royal charter by Her Majesty's Letters Patent of 1862; but the procedure in those courts is also regulated by the English law as administered in them, and the especial enactments relating thereto.

Act XLV. of 1860 is the Indian Penal Code. It came into operation from the 1st January, 1862, throughout all the territories of British India, repealing the substantive criminal law previously in force, which was mainly based on the Mahomedan law, and giving, instead of it, one comprehensive code, not only to the different Presidencies, which had varying codes for each, but also to the Presidency towns and the courts established by royal charter in them. It did even more than this; for it gave one code of laws alike to the European and native subjects of her Majesty, all attempts to which end before had invariably been opposed and frustrated. The code was originally prepared by Lord Macaulay, and then largely added to by Messrs. Cameron, Amos, and Elliott. It has been twice amended since, namely, by Acts IV. of 1867, and XXVII. of 1870 respectively. It is perhaps the most perfect piece of legislation that India has yet received, and is said to be better even than the English law, which is less scientific and precise in its definition of offences. The Penal Code explains every offence accurately, and leaves nothing whatever to the discretion of the officer dispensing justice; a great point in a country where the administration of the law is almost entirely in the hands of foreigners not alto-

gether devoid of race antipathies, and where it often devolves, besides, on young men almost fresh from school, working in remote places in perfect isolation. A companion code of substantive civil law for India is under preparation, some chapters from which have been passed into law in anticipation; such as the 'Indian Successions Act,' etc. The codification of the Revenue laws is also talked of.

When the Penal Code was passed, it became very necessary to provide a Criminal Procedure Code, to act as a companion to it. Up to this time the rules for the administration of the criminal law in its successive stages, from the first apprehension to the final disposal of the person accused, were those prescribed by Reg. IX. of 1793. But, as in the case of civil procedure, many and great changes were introduced in practice by successive subsequent enactments, which necessitated the whole being recast into a single code. This was effected by Act XXV. of 1861, by which the procedure for all criminal courts not established by royal charter was distinctly prescribed. An immense number of Regulations and Acts were consolidated by it, and many anomalies remedied and removed, among which not the least was the state of things with respect to Europeans in the Mofussil. Act XI. of 1836 repealed 53 George III., cap. 155, sec. 107, and abolished the exemption of Europeans from the jurisdiction of the Mofussil civil courts. In 1850, a law was proposed for similarly abolishing the exemption of Europeans from the jurisdiction of the Mofussil criminal courts. Another proposed Act was for declaring the law as to the privileges claimed by Europeans in the country. These contemplated changes called forth a howl from the Europeans, which will even now be remembered. Every sort of objection was raised against the draft acts, and all the organs of the press united in denouncing them vehemently. Till this time no question had been raised in regard to the efficiency or otherwise of the Mofussil courts. So long as it was native cases only that they adjudicated, they were

welcome to be as inefficient as they chose; but the greatest indignation was expressed at the bare idea of Europeans being tried by the self-same courts. The clamour was so great that the Government was obliged to yield to it for the time. But the objects then abandoned were fully secured by the Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code—the latter of which, reproduced as Act X. of 1872, provided a general and uniform system of procedure to be applied to persons of all classes without distinction; but still with this difference, that Europeans were made triable by European judges and magistrates only. The Act of 1872 was again partially revised by Act XI. of 1874, and, similarly to the Civil Procedure Code, was adopted for the High Courts on their appellate side, while in the exercise of their original criminal jurisdiction those courts were guided by Act X. of 1875, commonly called the High Courts' Criminal Procedure Act. At the suggestion of the Secretary of State there has been a further re-casting of the code since, with a view to provide one uniform practice for all courts in the country, including the High Courts and the Presidency Magistrates' Courts; and a bill, proposed to be brought into effect from the commencement of 1880, combines the substance of the High Courts' Act and the Presidency Magistrates' Act with that of Act X. of 1872.

In respect to evidence, the laws in force in India previous to 1853 were the English Acts 3 and 4 William IV., cap. 42; 6 and 7 Victoria, cap. 85; and 14 and 15 Victoria, cap. 95, all of which only laid down general rules on the subject. Practically, therefore, there were no laws of evidence known to the Mofussil courts at the time, though great efforts were of course made by every court to elicit good evidence without the aid of precise rules, in the best way possible. This disadvantage was obviated by Acts XIX. of 1853, and II. of 1855, which have since been substituted by Act I. of 1872. The law has been consolidated by the last enactment and extended to the whole of India. It discriminates good evidence from bad, and provides how the former is to be secured; assistance of which nature is

indispensable to judicial officers in India, since several of them are, from their youth, necessarily wanting in experience. There is no doubt that the Act has been very useful in practice; if it has done nothing else, it has enabled judicial officers to dispense with the attendance of witnesses with much greater promptness than before, which is in itself a great gain. It is all very well to say, as has been frequently asserted, that the best law of evidence for India is to abolish all rules on the subject; but it is difficult to imagine anything less satisfactory than a young English magistrate, with a vast amount of half-understood law in his head, foundering upon the evidence before him, only for not knowing how to avail himself of it properly.

The trial by jury was introduced in the Presidency towns of India by 13 George III., cap. 63, sec. 34, and 7 George IV., cap. 37. The third section of the latter Act provided that all juries for the trial of Christians should consist wholly of persons professing that religion; but it did not say that all juries for the trial of natives should be natives only. There was no reason why the privilege of the prisoner in one case should have been different from that in the other; but this is not the only instance in which the laws for the natives and Europeans have been un-uniform. Where they are so, there ought to be good reason for the difference; in the case of juries there was none, and the anomaly was therefore corrected by 2 and 3 William IV., cap. 117, under which juries are empanelled without reference to the nationality and faith either of the jurymen themselves, or of the prisoners to be tried by them.

The object of extending the jury system to India was doubtless to further the proper administration of justice; but it is not quite clear that that end has been secured, and it has been seriously considered by some of the High Courts whether the Government should not be asked to abolish juries altogether. The European jurors, as a class, think that they are empanelled only to acquit European offenders, however clearly their guilt may be established;

they take notice merely of the nationality of the culprits, and not of the evidence before them: and we cannot but add that the native jurors forswear themselves almost to the same extent. The law allows eight peremptory challenges to the prisoner, and, as only nine jurors are required in each case, the prisoner has every facility given to him to secure the sort of men he would like to be tried by: the consequence is that acquittals against the clearest evidence are quite common. Notwithstanding these defects, the system of trial by juries and assessors has now been extended to the Mofussil by chapter xxiii. of the Criminal Procedure Code; but the chief evil there is that the juries are mere cyphers, who simply carry out the orders of the presiding officers.

Oaths and solemn declarations were prescribed by sec. 6 of Reg. IV. of 1793, and Reg. L. of 1803, the practice observed under the law being for the Hindus to swear on the water of the Ganges, and the Mahomedans on the Korán. Both these observances were equally repugnant to the feelings of the parties concerned, which in several cases operated in keeping them aloof from the courts, and necessarily impeded the course of justice to that extent. Act V. of 1840 obviated the difficulty by substituting solemn affirmation in the place of oaths and declarations. The law has since been further amended by Act X. of 1873, sec. 7 of which provides that the forms of oaths and affirmations are to be prescribed by the High Courts, evidently with a view to secure uniformity of practice.

We now come to Act XXXIII. of 1854, which requires every decision, sentence, or final order passed by a judicial officer to be written in his own vernacular. There was an older law (XII. of 1843) which contained the same provision; but it referred to judges only, whereas the law of 1854 is applicable to all officers acting judicially, and necessarily includes collectors, magistrates, excise-officers, salt-officers, and others. The importance of the law is self-evident. It makes every judicial officer doubly careful in coming to a decision, simplifies matters for an appellate

court, and closes the door against the fraudulent practices of the *ámláhs*.

The law relating to the establishment of small cause courts in the Mofussil is a very important one, as it has contributed much to bring justice to the poor man's door. The law in regard to the Presidency towns was amended and re-enacted by Act IX. of 1850, but the courts in them were in existence from a long prior date. Act XLII. of 1860 provided for the extension of the principle to populous towns in the interior, and was amended by Act XI. of 1865, which furthered the extension to rural districts. The utility of the courts established is so well known and appreciated, that it is not necessary to say much on that point. As a rule the suits cognizable by the Mofussil courts do not exceed in amount or value Rs. 500, whether on balance of account or otherwise; but the Government is at liberty to extend the jurisdiction to Rs. 1000, and has done so in several instances. Another great facility has been afforded by empowering the courts to adjudicate Rent cases under Act X. of 1859, for which purpose every small cause court judge has been vested with the powers of a collector under the Act. This has much added to the facilities the ryot stood in need of in seeking for redress.

The police originally was regulated in all the Presidencies by rules, ordinances, and regulations passed in council and registered in the supreme court of each Presidency. The oldest regulation of the Bengal Code on the subject is Reg. XXII. of 1793, which first provided for the establishment of an efficient police. The rules for the general working of the police were subsequently consolidated and enlarged by Reg. XX. of 1817. Of the Acts, the first which consolidated the police rules for all India was Act XIII. of 1856, which had reference to the police and the administration of justice in the police-courts of the Presidency towns. It has since been substituted, so far as it related to Calcuttá, by Act IV. (B. C.) of 1866, and so far as it related to Madrás, by Act VIII. (M. C.) of

1867. A further law in operation in the Presidency towns is the recent Presidency Magistrates' Act—IV. of 1877—which defines the duties and powers of the magistrates, extends their summary jurisdiction, and gives the Government the authority to appeal against acquittals: this has just been doubled up with the new Criminal Procedure Code, which comes into effect from the commencement of 1880. The consolidated police law for the Mofussil is Act V. of 1861, while the trial of offenders by the magistrates is regulated by the Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code. The importance of the police in a country like India is very great, as it is the visible symbol of authority in the eyes of the people; and there is no doubt that all the endeavours made by the Government to regulate it were fully needed, for even now that task does not appear to have been overdone.

Of those who gave the greatest trouble to the police in the past, the European British subjects were the most in advance. They were for a long time virtually independent of the Mofussil police. The first law to bring them under control was Act V. of 1848, which was simply called 'an Act to amend the law relating to the taking of *mochulkás*, or penal recognizances.' It was known in the Mofussil as an Act which prevented broken heads by tying up over-ready hands. It has now been repealed, the passing of the Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code having rendered its continuation unnecessary.

The first municipal law for the Presidency towns in India was that contained in 33 George III., cap. 52, sec. 158, by which the justices of the peace were empowered to appoint scavengers for cleansing the streets, provide for watching them and keeping them in repairs, and make assessments for the purpose of defraying the expenses thereof. The Indian Acts on the subject have been numerous, the last general Act being XIV. of 1856, which had reference to all the three towns of Calcuttá, Madrás, and Bombay. This was altered, so far as it related to Calcuttá, by Act VI. (B. C.) of 1863, which again has

since been altered by Act IV. (B. C.) of 1876; as regards Madrás by Act IX. (M. C.) of 1867; and, as regards Bombay, by Acts (Bom. C.) II. of 1865, and IV. of 1867. The last Calcuttá Act has taken away the conservancy of the town from the justices, and entrusted it to a board of municipal commissioners partly elected by the rate-payers. The plan was tried before, in 1847, and failed because the homogeneity of the commissioners was not preserved. Half of the entire number was appointed by the Government, and were all Government officers. This mistake has been repeated by the new Act, so far that one-third of the appointments has been reserved in the hands of the Government. Self-government, *pure et simple*, has had no fair play yet: it is perhaps doubtful if the time for it has arrived.

In the Mofussil in Bengal, there was for a long time the extremest diversity of municipal constitutions, which have only recently been attempted to be welded. There was, first, Act XX. of 1856, which referred to villages and village-unions, and merely vested the district officers with the power to tax the owners of houses for the purpose of paying a municipal police, and spending any surplus on municipal improvements. There was also Act XXVI. of 1850, which gave the towns the privilege of taxing themselves on the application of the inhabitants, and Act III. (B. C.) of 1864, which gave a municipality to them *nolens volens*, whether they liked it or not. Lastly, there was Act VI. (B. C.) of 1868, which came between the above laws and conferred on the people of the smaller towns the privilege of giving expression to their opinions through their town committees, which had however very little power besides. Of these the arrangement sanctioned by Act III. (B. C.) of 1864, was supposed to represent self-government, though it actually did not. The different systems have now been consolidated by Act V. (B. C.) of 1876, which divides the municipalities into four classes, namely, first-class municipalities, to correspond with the municipalities maintained under Act III. (B. C.) of 1864; second-class municipalities, to correspond with those which

existed under the District Towns' Act of 1868; unions, or arrangements similar to those which were provided for by Act XX. of 1856; stations, or places like those in which Act XXVI. of 1850 was hitherto in force: so that virtually the new law admits of being extended to all places, including the smallest chowkeydáree village. There is, of course, no objection to this, so long as no attempt is made to enforce civilised sanitation with extra violence and speed in places which civilisation has not yet visited. The Act provides for new taxes and new obligations, and for considerable increase of expenditure, which necessarily gives it an objectionable form. The power given by it to the municipal commissioners is, again, much less than was allowed to them by the old enactments; while, on the other hand, the power it confers on the divisional commissioners is so great that it virtually nullifies the usefulness of the commissioners elected by the people. Here also, therefore, self-government is nothing but a name.

The number of social changes introduced in India by legislation has not been few. The bulk of the people have not yet reached the stage of civilisation in which moral results are attained solely by the force of education. The progress of education is certain, but slow; and the help of legislation was therefore necessary to effect what, uncondemned by the natives, could not well be tolerated by their conquerors.

By far the greatest of these changes was that enforced by Reg. XVII. of 1829, which declared the practice of suttee to be illegal and punishable. It is no small praise to the English Government that within sixty-four years after it took charge of the Dewánny, thirty-six years after it began to legislate regularly, and twenty-six years after Delhi was taken, a practice was put down which had acquired the sanction of age, and had been tolerated throughout the entire era of Mahomedan rule in the country. Great apprehensions were entertained at the time that the suppression of the practice might give rise to a general revolt; and it is said that when the Act was finally passed

by Lord Bentinck, his hand shook in signing the document. The responsibility devolving on him was very great; but bravely did he do justice to it. A brighter page in the annals of legislation is nowhere to be met with; though perhaps one equally bright is that which records Act VIII. of 1870, which provides for the prevention of infanticide.

Domestic slavery existed in India for a long period, and was sanctioned both by the Hindu and Mahomedan laws. Every opulent person in the country, every one in fact who was above the condition of the simplest mediocrity, had household slaves, and from this class chiefly were the concubines of the rich drawn. This was peculiarly the case in the Upper Provinces, where the male slaves were generally employed in the labours of husbandry. Even hereditary serfs existed. The English Government early set its face against these irregularities. The importation of slaves was prohibited by Reg. X. of 1811; and 3 and 4 William IV., cap. 85, sec. 88, promised early to mitigate the evils of slavery as they prevailed in the country. This promise was fulfilled ten years after, by Act V. of 1843, which discontinued the legal recognition of slavery, and extended every kind of protection over those who came under its operation. The abolition of slavery was not expressly enacted, because—domestic slavery apart—slavery in no other form has existed in India.

Reg. XXI. of 1795 prohibited Bráhmans in the province of Benáres from establishing *koorhs* (enclosures used as pyres, or for sitting *dhurná* in), wounding or killing their female relatives and children, or sitting *dhurná;* and also prevented the tribe of Rájkoomárs from killing their female children. The Bráhmans of Benáres were apparently the greatest *budjáts* of the day, and the law exhibits a marked dread of their power by exempting them from the punishment of death (*vide* Reg. XVI. of 1795, sec. 23), which exemption was not withdrawn till nearly a quarter of a century after, by Reg. XVII. of 1817, sec. 15. The offence of sitting *dhurná* is peculiar to India. When a man thus sits at another's door, the intent is to make the man sat

against an object of displeasure to the gods. The practice was prohibited in Bengal, Behár, and Orissá, by Reg. V. of 1797, which was subsequently substituted by Reg. VII. of 1820, by which the form of trial and the punishment awardable in cases of *dhurná* were altered.

The next important law to notice is Act XXI. of 1850—the *Lex Loci* Act—by which the laws of marriage and inheritance throughout the land were modified. It purports to extend the principle of sec. 9 of Reg. VII. of 1832, Bengal Code, and enjoins that 'so much of any law or usage now in force as inflicts on any person forfeiture of rights or property, or may be held in any way to impair or affect any right of inheritance by reason of his or her renouncing, or having been excluded from, the communion of any religion, or being deprived of caste, shall cease to be enforced as law' in any court in India. This was a stunning blow for the orthodox natives to receive, for it practically established freedom of conscience, and freedom in the profession of religion; and many petitions against the law were presented. But the good sense of the community has since got reconciled to the law, which simply did an act of justice to all parties concerned; and it is nowhere disliked or objected to at present.

Of perhaps even greater importance socially is Act XV. of 1856, which removed all legal obstacles to the remarriage of Hindu widows. It was levelled against one of the greatest domestic evils of the country, and has now been in force for more than twenty years, and has done much good so far as it has operated. But, unfortunately, it is still looked upon with horror by the higher grades of society, and by none so much as by the widows of those grades. This is exceedingly to be deplored. No Act can have a more salutary effect on the morals of the nation if it be only possible to carry out its provisions effectually; but for that possibility female education on a much larger scale than has yet been attempted must clear the way.

The law relating to the solemnization of Christian marriages having been distributed over several Acts of Par-

liament and of the Indian Government, it was simplified and compressed by Act XV. of 1872, one main object held in view by which was the regulation of the marriage of native Christians. Previous to the passing of this Act every marriage between native Christians was held to be valid where the ages of the contracting parties were not less than sixteen and thirteen respectively, whether such union had parental approbation to back it or not. This was complained of as a great grievance by the parents, as it virtually freed their children from their control before they had attained their majority. The new enactment accordingly makes the consent of parents and guardians imperative in every case of marriage in which the age of either of the contracting parties is less than eighteen years, —a very necessary condition, since Christian marriages, unlike Hindu and Mahomedan marriages, are not based on parental choice.

Acts XXI. of 1857, and III. of 1867, deal with public gambling and the keeping of gaming-houses. The especial law for Bengal is Act II. (B. C.) of 1867. The offence is so common all over India that stringent measures on the subject were required. Gaming is, however, not punishable except when carried on in public places or thoroughfares, or in common gaming-houses. The nuisance as a private one does not admit of being checked; and yet there is no doubt that the injury caused by it in India is very great, and frequently leads to the ruin of individuals and of families.

We may here notice Act V. of 1844, passed for the suppression of lotteries not authorized by the Government. There is no question that lotteries are public nuisances, and that much mischief is created by them; but there is as little doubt too that in countries no further advanced than India is, they may be made very useful for municipal purposes, offering a ready mode for raising supplies, as they did, in fact, in the past, without causing any ill-feeling, but the contrary. These remarks are applicable, however, only to public lotteries conducted by corporations for the

general weal. All private lotteries are akin to swindling, and have been correctly suppressed.

Act XIV. of 1868 is the Indian Contagious Diseases' Act, passed for the prevention of venereal diseases. The subject is held to be very dirty, and discussions on it are studiously avoided. It is certain that it involves questions of great importance, which have not yet been satisfactorily settled in Europe; and we hold the introduction of the law in India to be premature in the highest degree. It enforces a system fraught with great evils, which can only be justified if a greater amount of good be derivable therefrom. The protection it affords against contagion is uncertain, for it does not reach the root of it; while the premium it holds out to shamelessness and immorality is very great. It is all very well to talk of regulating vice for the purpose of checking it; but the process adopted for doing so does not fit rightly with the commonest principles of decency and self-respect. The comparatively modest prostitute is soon converted by it into a hardened reprobate; and what makes the Act unbearable is that it is unequal, as forced on one sex while the other goes free. It tells us plainly, what is against common-sense, that the laws to govern the conduct of the two sexes ought to be different; nor do we see clearly wherein the morality lies in hunting down women to enroll themselves on a register of vice. The operation of the law is very oppressive, and the conduct of the police with reference to the enforcement of it has frequently been complained of as disgustingly offensive. It is rather fortunate that, as a rule, the Act has not yet been enforced on any but the commonest and most avowed classes of prostitutes. But we see no reason why even they should be victimized by it.

Act I. of 1856 was the first law for the suppression of the sale and exposure of obscene books and pictures, which has since been sufficiently provided for in the Penal Code. It is only necessary with reference to the law to remark that almost all the obscene books and pictures in the country are imported to it from Europe. The immorality

of the natives has been a stock-subject for Missionaries and Anglo-Indian newspapers to descant upon; but still had the natives no idea of obscene representations other than those to be seen in their temples, which are associated with the achievements of their gods. No idea of connecting those obnoxious figures and representations with books and pictures for circulation in private families, in every nook and corner of the country, sprang up with them; though of course the native booksellers took up the notion gladly when they received it second-hand from their civilised brethren of the West.

Of the Acts affecting commercial interests, one of the most important is the Act for the relief of insolvent debtors, which was extended to India in 1828, by 9 George IV., cap. 73. This gave a new phase to commercial morality in the country. Knavery and deception were not very uncommon in it in the past; but they have now become rampant under a law that affords every facility to the designing villain to dupe his creditors. 'I shall borrow and then get white-washed,' is the open boast of charlatans in the streets.

The next law of importance is Act XXVIII. of 1855, which repealed the usury laws. By sec. 30 of 13 George III., cap. 63, it was enacted that no person shall take interest on loans of money at a higher rate than twelve per cent. But twelve per cent. interest is too little for a country where almost every line of business yields a larger profit. The consequence was that the provisions of the law were openly evaded. Wisely, therefore, does the Act of 1855 leave the rate of interest to be determined by the contracting parties themselves, who would best know what would be suitable to them under difference of circumstances. What has been gained by the new law, is the prevention of a large amount of fraud and perjury. The usury laws gave no real relief to the debtor. The best relief for him is that afforded by the Limitation Act, namely, XIV. of 1859, which has been since substituted by Act IX. of 1871.

Of the Literary Acts, the most important is Act XI. of 1835, which enfranchised the Press from censorship, and regulated the publication of printed periodical works. It did not exactly concede liberty of the Press to India; but it repealed the regulations which had previously existed for restricting the establishment of presses and the circulation of books and papers, and substituted a system of registration that considerably modified the surveillance that had all along been exercised by the Government. The Act was subsequently modified and substituted by Act XXV. of 1867 for the regulation of printing presses and newspapers, for the preservation of copies of books printed, and for the registration of such books. No book or paper can under its provisions be printed without the names of the printer and publisher being exhibited upon it, and every keeper of a printing press has to make a declaration before a magistrate in regard to it. With these restrictions the Press is virtually free.

It is said that this liberty has been largely abused, particularly by the Native Press. This may be true to a partial extent; but it is the Press also, and the Press alone —the Native even more than the European—that has guarded the interests and freedom of the people, pointed out the mistakes of the Government, and suggested how those mistakes were to be corrected. In a country like India, where there is no popular representation to speak of, this alone should be a protecting shield to the Press. How can the Governors and Councils of India know anything whatever about the people, except through the Press? Through their own officers they receive such accounts only as the subordinates of the Czar send up to St. Petersburg. The publication of seditious writings has since been guarded against by Act IX. of 1878, which no right-thinking native has objected to, though the necessity of passing it at all may have been questioned. It is doubtful if sedition can be 'written up' in India; while the sensitiveness betrayed by the Government on the subject is apt to be misunderstood as a proof of its weakness.

Act XXIX. of 1837 directed the discontinuance in Bengal of the use of the Persian language in judicial and revenue proceedings. This was a large stride. It liberated at one stroke the vernacular languages of the country, which had been systematically held down by a foreign tongue that was officially dominant. Since then the Bengali, which was a very poor language before, has become one of the richest in India.

Act XX. of 1847 is the Copyright Act, which established the same copyright in India as exists in England. The protection afforded by the Act extends to forty-two years, and, if the book be published in the lifetime of the author, to seven years after his death if such period be longer than forty-two years. The copyright of books published after an author's death belongs to the proprietor of the manuscript and his assigns. The encouragement given by the Act has produced a shoal of authors, good, bad, and indifferent; and, altogether, it has had a very salutary effect on the diffusion of knowledge.

Act II. of 1857 established and incorporated the first University in India, namely, the Calcuttá University; and Acts XXII. and XXVII. of the same year did as much for Bombay and Madrás. Commenced thus late, the Indian Universities do not of course take their place side by side with the English Universities, and for a long time to come will not attempt to do so; but they have already considerably accelerated the progress of education among the natives. Act XLVII. of 1850 increased the powers of the Universities to confer degrees; and Act XXI. of 1875 conferred on one of them—the Calcuttá University—the power to grant honorary degrees without examination. Under the provisions of the last enactment, the Calcuttá University has enrolled among its D.L.'s the names of the Prince of Wales and of several other gentlemen—native and European. Among the former, the first name is that of the Rev. K. M. Banerjee, an Oriental and general scholar of profound erudition.

Among the other miscellaneous enactments, those re-

lating to the Court of Wards are particularly important. The earliest law on the subject was Reg. X. of 1793, which declared minors, idiots, lunatics, contumacious persons, and persons of notorious profligacy of character, to be incapable of managing their estates; and provided for their estates being managed by persons appointed by the Government. The conditions of disqualification from contumacy and profligacy of character were, however, so indefinite, that they had to be revoked soon after by Reg. VII. of 1796. Of the law of 1793, one section—27—especially provided that, on the minors attaining the age of tuition, proper teachers were to be appointed for educating them suitably to their condition of life. This subject was more fully legislated upon by Act XXVI. of 1854, and again since, by Act IV. (B. C.) of 1870, part VIII.; and the Madrás law on the subject is based mainly on that of Bengal. The matter has nevertheless nowhere received as much attention as it deserves. As a rule the revenue officers take great interest in extricating Wards' estates from their monetary difficulties, and frequently succeed, not only in paying off debts, but also in accumulating balances for the benefit of their owners on the expiration of their nonage. But the same interest in the personal improvement of the minors is seldom evinced. This is much to be regretted, for more depends on the zemindárs than on any other class of men in respect to the improvement of the country; and the self-interest of the Government also looks in the same direction. There are Wards' Institutions in different places, but they are all more or less ill-managed. The institution at Calcuttá was established in 1856, and in more than twenty-three years has produced two or three passable zemindárs only. So little is done in these establishments in fact, that it is broadly asserted all over the country that the Government wárds turn out, for the most part, to be the worst, the most vicious, of zemindárs, and that the pernicious influence of family dependents, from which they are so sedulously kept apart, is more than compensated by the drinking and other vicious habits

which they have so many facilities to acquire in the larger metropolitan towns, reeking with sensuality and crime, to which they are usually removed. A minor thus educated of course undoes in a short time all the good the collector may have effected in his estate during his minority; and this, we understand, is the net result in every place.

The case is precisely the same in respect to minors, other than those brought up under the Court of Wards. Act XL. of 1858 provides for the care of the persons and property of these in Bengal, and Acts XIV. of 1858 and XX. of 1864 for those in Madrás and Bombay respectively. The law in all places expressly enjoins the suitable education of the minors according to their condition in life; but, if we cannot go so far as to say that this provision is a dead letter, we may, at least, safely assert that as little is done by the Government in fulfilment of it as can well be imagined.

The age of minority for zemindárs was extended by Reg. XXVI. of 1793 from the expiration of the fifteenth to that of the eighteenth year. The reason for the change is explicitly stated in the law: 'Emancipated from the control of their guardians, and with their property at their disposal, they (the boy-proprietors) abandon themselves to those pleasures to which their youth naturally inclines them, and the management of their estates consequently devolves on favourites and dependents, who are interested in confirming them in their habits of dissipation. The pernicious consequences of this are not confined to the proprietors. The cultivators of the soil, and the various orders of people residing upon their lands, suffer equally by the rapacity and mismanagement of their agents, and the improvement of the country is retarded.' One may well doubt whether all the evils enumerated were obviated by an extension of nonage by three additional years. But it was certainly a move in the right direction; and since then the age of minority has, in all cases, been extended to the end of the eighteenth year by Act IX. of 1875, the Indian Majority Act, passed expressly

to protect young people from incurring debts. The question of further extending the nonage of zemindárs till their twenty-first year was also considered; but it was believed that in India maturity, both physical and mental, is actually reached much earlier than in England, where the age of majority is twenty-one, and it was therefore held to be inexpedient to give minor zemindárs a different majority than that fixed for other classes.

The first coinage law was Reg. XXXV. of 1793, which prohibited the currency of any gold and silver coin, except the 19th *Sunn* Sicca rupee, and the 19th *Sunn* gold-mohur, and their halves and quarters. The 19th *Sunn* meant the nineteenth year of the reign of Sháh Álum, so that both these coins were commemorative of the Mahomedan era. In 1770, the Government ordered their being coined in the English Mint, and by the Regulation of 1793 they were declared to be legal tenders, and receivable in all public payments. This was going a step beyond what the Mahomedans had ever taken, and it was soon found to be a false one. Under the native administrations, the gold-mohur was never regarded as a legal tender. It was only coined for the convenience of individuals, and its value fluctuated with that of gold in the market. The English Government soon found that it was not possible to make the coin current. It had never been so, and usage is everything in India. The gold, besides, in the mohur was below the worth of the silver in the number of rupees for which it was ordered to pass, and the natives naturally demurred to receive it at that value. The law had therefore to be altered, and this was done when coins commemorative of English rule were struck. Act XVII. of 1835 introduced the Company's rupee and the Company's gold-mohur, and their halves and quarters, and declared the mohur to be not receivable as legal tender. Another Act—XXI. of 1835—was passed in the same year for introducing a copper coinage in Bengal, and this was re-enacted for all India by Act XXII. of 1844. The last coinage Act is XIII. of 1862, and refers to silver and copper

coinage only. The gold-mohur has virtually ceased to be coined.

Act XIX. of 1861 provided for a Government paper currency, and has since been substituted by Act III. of 1871. Before the date of the first Act, the banks of Bengal, Madrás, and Bombay had their own notes; but these have been stopped, and one paper currency given to all India by the Government. This, which under a native government would probably have been regarded simply as an assertion of royal authority, is, under a foreign regime, received all over India as an indirect method of collecting in the Treasury vaults all the specie in the land. The facility afforded by the currency is, however, too great not to be appreciated, and is largely availed of. The latest improvement is the introduction of the five-rupee note. If one-rupee notes were introduced, the circulation of silver would become almost nominal.

The emigration of Indian coolies has been frequently legislated upon since 1837. Previous to that year there was no law to check or regulate it, and the consequence was that the mortality among emigrants on board was very great. This forced attention to the subject, and a lot of desultory laws, commencing with Acts V. and XXXII. of 1837, were passed. These were amended and codified by Act XIII. of 1864, by which all contracts for emigrant labour were made unlawful, except with the British Colonies and certain French possessions, precise rules to regulate which were at the same time laid down. By arrangements since sanctioned, a protector of emigrants, to look after the interests of the coolies, and an emigration agent, to act for each Colonial Government, are provided for. There are also medical inspectors of emigrants, depôts to receive them, and licensed vessels to carry them, under very precise rules as to space, scales of provisions, etc. The last revised law on the subject is Act VII. of 1871, which is as humane an enactment as could be desired. There are still occasionally many deaths on board; but the Government has neglected nothing to prevent them.

Act XIV. of 1866 is the Post-office Act, which reduced the inland postage of letters, of minimum weight, to six pie, and of newspapers to one anna each, irrespective of the distance they had to be carried. Similar reductions were also made by it in the rates of packet and *banghy* postage; and, since then, some further reductions have been made in favour of registered newspapers, etc. The aggregate concessions to the public in this way have been great, and the postal reports bear unmistakable evidence of the advance the people have made in letter-writing therefrom. The gain to the Government has been even greater, by the increase in the number of transmissions, alike of letters, newspapers, and registered parcels. The confidence of the people in the arrangements now in force is so great that even the poorest and most ignorant do not hesitate to remit their savings in silver to their families by post. The Act also introduced the payment of postage by stamps, a facility which commended itself as being in accordance with the practice obtaining in other countries, and which has been very widely appreciated.

Reg. V. of 1817 declared the rights of the Government and of individuals to treasure-troves. It commenced by stating that the provisions of the Hindu and Mahomedan law on the subject were widely at variance with each other, and that it was necessary, therefore, to establish one uniform principle to go by. In a country where the discovery of hidden treasure is so frequent, where, for ages and ages, people never considered their money to be safe till it was lodged underground, the necessity of a clear law of right is undeniable. But the law of 1817 did not meet this need fully, and the practice followed in the different Presidencies in dealing with cases as they arose, came in time to be very divergent. Act VI. of 1878 has been passed to remedy this state of things, and provides uniformity of procedure throughout all India. Under the law as it was understood before in Bengal, all troves discovered had to be deposited in the Zillah courts, on which devolved the duty of inviting claimants, the finder getting the whole

money, when unclaimed, up to a lakh of rupees, while the excess over that sum was credited to the Government. By the new Act the collector is required to advertise for claimants, and the partition of property unclaimed, or which has lain hid for more than a hundred years, is prescribed in the proportion of three-fourths to the finder, and one-fourth to the proprietor of the land, whether represented by the Government or by any private individual. Provision is made at the same time for securing by purchase the possession of discoveries having a historical or antiquarian interest, for the public benefit—a very important stipulation, as such discoveries in the country promise to be very numerous.

Act XVIII. of 1835 regulated the use of badges by servants in the employ of private individuals. As the natives of India are all childishly anxious to have servants in livery and with badges, it early became indispensable to put down attempts to dress private servants after the servants of the Government. The Act has since been substituted by provisions in the Penal Code. The difficulties created by the public are at times so great that in Calcuttá itself, so recently as during the administration of Lord Northbrook, a police order had to be issued to prohibit the native grandees and Begging-Báboos from dressing their servants after those of the Governor-General.

The especial laws regarding the employment of the natives in the public service deserve to be here remembered. By Reg. IX. of 1833 the office of Deputy Collector was thrown open to them. Act VIII. of 1836 similarly opened out the offices of Principal Sudder Ameen, Sudder Ameen, and Moonsiff; and by Act XV. of 1843, their employment as Deputy Magistrates was sanctioned. Since then there have been large admissions in the Account Department, the Education Department, the Post-office, the Public Works Department, and the Secretariats; but there has been extension only, no advance to the fore. The natives are now held eligible for almost all appointments in the lower grades; but the higher grades are still

virtually unapproachable by them. 3 and 4 William IV., cap. 85, sec. 87, expressly says, that 'no native of the said territories (India), nor any natural-born subject of H. M. resident therein, shall, by reason of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour, or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office, or employment under the said Company.' This promise of advancement was repeated by the Queen's Proclamation of the 1st November, 1858, after the suppression of the Mutiny, in the following words: 'It is our further will that our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability, and integrity to discharge.' There is no question now of the education, ability, and integrity of the natives: but not one of them has yet become a district judge, or a district collector and magistrate; far less has any one obtained a membership of the Board of Revenue, or a secretaryship to the Government. The original law is just forty-six years old now, and within this period it has been honoured only to the extent of opening out in each Presidency town some half-a-dozen appointments of higher salary than £100 a month. It is a moot-question to ask if the natives really deserve no better.

We have referred to such laws and enactments only as, we think, will be interesting and intelligible to the general reader: it would have been quite out of our purpose, quite out of our ability, to do otherwise. That there has been excessive legislation in India is apparent from the size of the statute book; but that is fully accounted for by the bit-by-bit manner in which the legislators were obliged to proceed. Slowly as the confines of the empire were extended, the regulations had to be made separately for each territory as it was acquired. Both of the Regulations and the Acts the subsequent portions exhibit constant efforts to reduce into one law all the laws and rulings which had come to be framed on each subject; and by this process many Regulations and Acts were repealed, altered,

and modified. So long as it was possible to do it, the Government confined itself thus to the work of consolidation only. But it became impracticable to go on in this way long; the number of Acts became too many, and consistency had finally to be given to the system; and this led to the codes of procedure being formed, the passing of a penal code, and the laying down of precise modes for collecting the revenue, which were succeeded by several repealing Acts, by which hundreds and hundreds of Regulations and Acts were swept away. The old Regulations have now, in fact, been almost entirely wiped off; and the number of Acts has been considerably reduced. The ideal held in view at present is to have one Act, and one only, on every single subject; and, by carrying out this idea steadily, the judicial work in the country is being rendered easier and easier every day.

# BRITISH OPIUM POLICY, AND ITS RESULTS.*

## CHAPTER I.

### HISTORY OF THE TRADE WITH CHINA.

It is some five years now since Mr. J. W. Pease, M.P., offered two prizes of £200 and £100 respectively for the two best essays on 'British Opium Policy, and its Results.' The offer was widely announced, both in England and India, and the result was the production of some seventy-five essays. The adjudicators of the prizes were Sir Charles Trevelyan, Sir Bartle Frere, and Sir Louis Mallet; and they awarded the first prize to Mr. Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, agent-general for British Columbia, and the second to the Rev. F. S. Turner, secretary of the Anglo-Oriental Society for the Suppression of the Opium Trade. The second essay has since been published by Messrs. Sampson Low and Co., of London, and we cite it at the commencement of this article as an apology for discussing the subject. Mr. Turner deals with it in a most complete and exhaustive manner; but the story will bear to be retold.

Opium is manufactured from the juice of the white poppy, otherwise known as *Papaver Somniferum.* A small quantity of it is grown in Turkey and Persia; a yet smaller quantity was heretofore grown in China, which has since enormously increased within the last twelve or

* *British Opium Policy, and its results to India and China,* by F. S. Turner, B.A. London: Sampson Low and Co., 1876.

thirteen years; while its cultivation to the greatest extent is carried on in India, both in the British dominions and in some of the semi-independent native States. In the days of Hindu and Mahomedan supremacy the produce was very inconsiderable, and the cultivation was left entirely in private hands. The drug was then grown for medicinal purposes only, and it is doubtful if even its medicinal virtues were fully understood. The idea of converting it into a source of revenue appears to have first occurred to the native chiefs of Málwá, and to have been thence borrowed by the British administrators of Bengal. The plans of operation followed by the two parties have however been very dissimilar. Under the native Governments the privilege of growing and vending the drug has always been free. The British Government, on the contrary, has assumed the monopoly in both respects from the commencement.

It is difficult now to ascertain when opium first became an article of consumption in China. The native States of India which began the cultivation earliest appear always to have appropriated their produce partly for home consumption, and partly for export to the neighbouring districts. In Bengal very little of the drug was manufactured at this period; but there is no doubt that a part of the produce, inconsiderable as it was, found its way to China and Malaccá; and it seems very probable that this comprised all the opium contribution of India to foreign countries at the outset. The system was subsequently improved on behalf of the East India Company at the suggestion of Col. Watson, by Mr. Wheeler, the Vice-President of Bengal in 1773, when the monopoly of the drug was assumed. The Government venture first sent out was very inconsiderable, and before 1780 the number of chests exported rarely exceeded two hundred.

It was in this last-mentioned year that a depôt of opium was established by the East India Company in the China waters, on board of two vessels in a bay to the south of Macáo, known by the name of Larks' Bay. But here the

traders met with so much annoyance from the Chinese officials and the pirates that they were obliged to send out, in 1794, a ship properly armed and exclusively laden with the drug, and to station it permanently at Whampoá, ten miles below Canton, as a fixed depôt for the sale of opium. This arrangement was successful, and, in 1796, the number of chests sent out rose to six hundred. It had unfortunately also the effect of alarming the Chinese Government, which had hitherto admitted the drug as medicine, in which character it was entered in the tariff of Canton, but which was now found to be no longer applicable to it.

The introduction of the drug into China was for the first time authoritatively interdicted in 1796. Its evil effects in the country had already developed themselves, and the Emperor Keáking decreed that those found guilty of smoking it were to be pilloried and bambooed, and the vendors and smugglers subjected to the still severer punishments of banishment and death. Measures more severe and stringent could not well have been taken to begin with; but the agents of the East India Company were cunning and active, and, the taste of the mandarins in power having already been vitiated, the drug continued to be clandestinely introduced and used.

The present practice of growing the poppy and preparing opium in Bengal through the agency of Government officers was introduced in 1797, when the export was augmented at once from six hundred to four thousand chests, remaining fixed at the latter figure for about twenty years, as shown below:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Export in | 1800 . . . . | 4054 chests. |
| „ | 1810 . . . . | 4561 „ |
| „ | 1820 . . . . | 4000 „ |

Up to this time there had been no competition of Málwá opium, the provinces of Central India having been kept in perpetual alarm and confusion by the Pindáris and Mahrattás, which left no room for the development of

agriculture. On the termination of the war of 1818-19, Málwá was ceded to the British Government, and with the restoration of order and security, the cultivation of the poppy in it was widely extended. No poppy is grown in any of the British districts of Málwá; but the cultivation is extensive in the adjoining territories of Holkár, Boondee, Kotáh, and Oodeypore; and, at the time alluded to, exports commenced to be made from them not only to places within British limits, but to the Portuguese settlements of Diu and Dáman, in the gulf of Cambay, whence they were sent out to the Eastern Archipelago and to China, in vessels under Portuguese colours. The interests of the Bengal monopoly were thus brought in direct collision with the free-trade from Málwá, which gave rise to many attempts to put down the latter. At first the British Government adopted the plan of entering the Central India market as a purchaser, and buying up so much of the produce as left little or none for direct export. But this tended only to enhance the price of the article, and to increase the extent of its cultivation, the produce being multiplied sevenfold in five years. The tactics were thereupon changed by the introduction of an agency system in Málwá, the petty native princes in its neighbourhood being at the same time prevailed upon to place restrictions on the culture in their States, and to prevent transport of the produce through their territories, in consideration of a pecuniary compensation made to them for loss of revenue. But this arrangement did not answer. On the one hand it was found impossible to prevent clandestine cultivation in territories to which the machinery of the British Government did not extend; on the other, the cultivators grumbled for unrestricted culture, the merchants for perfect freedom of trade, and the native chiefs for the preservation of their dignity and authority, and, as none of these complainants were quite as docile as the Bengalis, the Government of Lord William Bentinck found it necessary, in 1828, to desist altogether from any interference with the free cultivation of poppy in Central

India, a system of licenses only being introduced for the conveyance of the opium grown from the place of its growth to Bombay, for sale and export on private account. The fee of the license was at first fixed at Rs. 175 per chest. It has since assumed the form of an export duty, and has been raised to Rs. 650 per chest, that being considered to be the highest amount that can be levied with safety, the guide for fixing the rate being the price which the opium commands in the China market, *minus* the cost of production, transit, and shipment, and a fair trading profit. This is known as the Bombay system.

The aggregate exports of opium in 1830-1 amounted to 19,416 chests, namely, from Bengal 6,560, and from Málwá 12,856. In 1870-1, or within forty years after, the total number of chests was 89,008, namely, from Bengal 49,030, and from Málwá 39,978; and in the years following the number has been nearly the same, being 88,638 in 1873-4, of which 43,337 were from Bengal, and 45,301 from Málwá. These figures may therefore be accepted as representing the average actual extent of the trade at the present moment; and a yet further development of it may be expected in time, as the cultivation in Bengal has lately been extended on all sides.

Till 1820 the opium exported was mixed up with legal merchandise at the port of Canton, and, as the quantities were not very large, they were thence wheedled into the country with the connivance of the imperial officers, who were well bribed. In that year, however, the Peking Cabinet, having received some inkling of the organized system of corruption under which the import was carried on, ordered further inquiry into the matter, the result of which was that the local authorities were compelled to force the merchants who regulated the traffic of the port to give security that no opium was on board before any ship was allowed to discharge her cargo at Whampoá. An order to this effect had before been issued, in 1809, but had never been acted upon. It was now vigorously enforced, and this led to the subsequent smuggling being

carried on for a time through the Portuguese at Macáo, where the opium began to be landed. The Portuguese officials, however, soon became exorbitant in their exactions, upon which the opium of the East India Company and of the Americans was removed on board of ships, which were known by the name of 'receiving ships,' eight or ten of which were stationed at a time at Lintin, at the mouth of the Canton river, about ten miles from Canton.

All the evils of the British opium policy were fully developed during this stage. The receiving vessels laden with the contraband commodity belonged to the East India Company and to American merchants, and lay at the mouth of a Chinese river, putting the whole Chinese Empire at defiance. They remained in day-time surrounded by war and police boats which dared not approach them; while at night the Chinese smuggler, equally defiant, quietly came alongside of them to receive his opium, paying ready-money for it on the spot, when not already paid for at Canton. The smuggling vessels were all well manned and well armed, and carried on their trade within view of the revenue cruisers in perfect unconcern. They were rarely interfered with, as they paid a fee to the officers of the preventive squadron for connivance; and it is said that very often the Chinese Government boats themselves were engaged in the trade. In the distribution of the drug through the interior of the empire the laws were equally set at naught, all overt opposition being easily pacified by the application of a bribe. The periodical issue of vain prohibitions and empty threats was continued by the Government; and these were responded to by equally idle reports from the detective officers of their having swept the seas of all smuggling vessels, and captured and burnt, or thrown overboard, all the opium found in them.

The manner of conducting the trade was generally as follows: Every foreign vessel on its arrival at Canton was, by the port rules in force, subjected to the general control of a society of merchants, called the Hong, or Security

Merchants, constituted by the Government for transacting business with foreigners. One of these was required to tender himself as security on behalf of the vessel to the Government, and did so generally on receiving the assurance that the vessel would take all her tea from him. The opium on board being contraband, had previously to be removed to the depôt-ships stationed at Lintin, and there became the subject of distinct arrangements between the Chinese brokers and the consignees of the drug, in which the Hong merchants generally took no part, beyond finding the brokers when required to do so. The price being agreed upon (invariably on trust as to quality, without examination of any muster whatever, and in entire dependence upon the warranty of the seller), the value of the quality bargained for was paid down in cash at Canton, a delivery order for the drug being taken in exchange. This passed through several hands before it reached the man in charge of a smuggling boat, on whom devolved the task of proceeding to the depôt-ship to receive delivery of the opium. The transaction or risk of the seller terminated on delivery being given, the risk of smuggling devolving on the purchaser. The smuggler's men then broke open the chests and put the opium balls into mat bags, in which they were placed on board the smuggling boat. Nothing but the opium was put into the bags, that the load might be lightened as much as possible, to allow of its being easily carried off in case of pursuit.

The success of the trade depended entirely on the connivance of the mandarins. This was easily secured, and led to a hope being entertained that the traffic might be extended all along the coast of China; but, as all European trade was prohibited beyond the limits of Canton, there was more difficulty in this than had been anticipated. Clandestine shipments to this end were, nevertheless, made from time to time, and by 1834 the system of smuggling was in full force all along the eastern coast, 'by the stealthy entrance of the English ships,' as a native report states, 'into the ports of Fuhkien, Chekeang, Keaugnan,

Shantung, and Tientsin,' while receiving vessels were stationed at Namoá and Chinchew, in the same manner as at Lintin. This increased the alarm of the Chinese Government, and led to the proposition submitted in 1834 or 1835, by Heu-Naetse, one of the ablest statesmen of the day, that the import of the drug be legalized as the best method of dealing with an unavoidable evil, and that it be admitted into the country on the payment of an exorbitant duty. But this was opposed by two other equally great statesmen, Choo-Tsun and Heu-Kew, who recommended an opposite course, namely, the enforcement of greater vigilance and severity, or rather that one determined effort be made to crush out the illicit traffic for ever; and, the views of the Peking Cabinet being in consonance with the suggestions of the latter, a new edict of great stringency was promulgated, while poor Heu-Naetse was banished into Tártáry.

The whole case is so succinctly stated by the Chinese officers named, that some extracts from their reports would not be out of place here. Heu-Naetse in his Memorial gives the history of the trade as follows:

'Opium was originally ranked among medicines: its qualities are stimulant; it also checks excessive secretions, and prevents the evil effects of noxious vapours. In the Materia Medica of Le Sheching, of the Ming dynasty, it is called *Afooyung*. When any one is long habituated to inhaling it, it becomes necessary to resort to it at regular intervals, and the habit of using it, being inveterate, is destructive of time, injurious to property, and yet dear to one even as life. . . . .

'In Keenlung's reign, as well as previously, opium was inserted in the tariff of Canton as medicine, subject to a duty of three *taels* per hundred *catties*, with an additional charge of two *taels*, four *mace*, and five *candareens* under the name of charge for package. After this it was prohibited. In the first year of Keáking, those found guilty of smoking it were subject only to the punishment of the pillory and bamboo. Now they have in the course of

time become liable to the severest penalties—transportation in various degrees, and death after the ordinary continuance in prison. Yet the smokers of the drug have increased in number, and the practice has spread almost throughout the whole empire. . . . .

'In Keenlung's and the previous reigns, when opium passed through the custom-house and paid a duty, it was given into the hands of the Hong merchants in exchange for tea and other goods. But at the present time, the prohibitions of the Government being most strict against it, none dare openly to exchange goods for it; all secretly purchase it with money. . . . Formerly the barbarian merchants brought foreign money to China, which they paid in exchange for goods, which was a source of pecuniary advantage to the people of all the sea-board provinces. But latterly, the barbarian merchants have clandestinely sold opium for money, which has rendered it unnecessary for them to import foreign silver. Thus foreign money has been going out of the country, while none comes into it. . . .

'In the first year of Taoukwang, the governor of Kwangtung and Kwangse, Yuen Yuen, proceeded with all the rigour of the law against Ye Hangshoo, head of the opium establishment then at Macáo. The consequence was that foreigners, having no one with whom to place their opium, proceeded to Lintin to sell it. . . . Here are constantly anchored seven or eight large ships in which the opium is kept, and which are therefore called "receiving ships." At Canton there are brokers of the drug who are called "melters." These pay the price of the drug into the hands of the resident foreigners, who give them orders for the delivery of the opium from the receiving ships. There are carrying boats flying up and down the river, and these are vulgarly called "fast crabs" and "scrambling dragons." They are well armed with guns and other weapons, and are manned with some scores of desperadoes, who ply their oars as if they were wings to fly with. All the custom-houses and military posts which they pass are largely bribed.

If they happen to encounter any of the armed cruizing boats, they are so audacious as to resist.'

The above statement is supplemented by the following suggestion: 'Since then, it will not answer to close our ports against all trade, and since the laws issued against opium are quite inoperative, the only method left is to revert to the former system, to permit the barbarian merchants to import opium, paying duty thereon as a medicine, and to require that, after having passed the custom-house, it shall be delivered to the Hong merchants only in exchange for merchandise, and that no money be paid for it.'

Choo-Tsun, who opposed the above suggestion, based his argument for suppressing the traffic altogether on the high ground of saving the people from destruction. 'To sum up the matter,' says he, 'the wide-spreading and baneful influence of opium when regarded simply as injurious to property, is of inferior importance; but, when regarded as hurtful to the people, it demands most anxious consideration. Property, it is true, is that on which the subsistence of the people depends: yet a deficiency of it may be supplied, and an impoverished people improved; whereas it is beyond the power of any artificial means to save people enervated by luxury.'

Up to this time, or rather nearly up to it, the entire British trade of all kinds with China was monopolized by the East India Company. This monopoly was abolished when the Charter of the Company was renewed in 1833; and Bengal opium, which had hitherto been conveyed to China by the East India Company direct, began from this period to be sold by them to the merchants in Calcuttá for export—a system which is still in force, and which is held by some persons as exonerating the Government of the crime of participating directly in the trade. All the other phases of the trade remained unaltered; especially the bickerings with the Chinese Government, whose efforts to check the evil were utterly fruitless.

In 1839, a special commissioner, Lin, was appointed by the court of Peking to deal with the question vigorously,

and was vested with sufficient powers to enforce the prohibitory orders already in existence. He commenced his task by the publication of a warning addressed to his own countrymen, which has received the credit of being a State document of great ability. It was followed by an argumentative remonstrance addressed to Her Majesty the Queen, calling upon her to forbid the manufacture of opium in her own dominions, and to authorize the seizure and destruction of all contraband goods at all places. Then followed overt acts of great stringency, one of the first of which was the seizure of twenty thousand chests of opium belonging to the English and other merchants, which he threw into the sea. Various other measures of persecution against the merchants were also resorted to, and that led to the first China War, commenced in 1840, and concluded in 1842, which at the time was by some regarded as the Opium War, while others called it a war in defence of free trade, but which public opinion has since more correctly designated as the war in defence of free trade in opium. The result of that war proved to the Chinese Government, what it had so long refused to believe, that all its efforts to frustrate the opium trade were vain. The laws became thenceforward more and more lax; the trade, still treated as contraband, being continued with fewer restrictions.

The victories of Sir Hugh Gough were terminated by the treaty of Nanking, signed in 1842, by which Hong Kong was ceded to the British Crown, upon which it became the principal depôt of European commerce, maintaining for a long time the character of a great smuggling depôt and the emporium of the opium trade. Four ports, in addition to Canton, were also opened out, namely: those of Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo, and Shanghae; the appointment of British consuls to each port was provided for; and the mediation of the Hong merchants done away with, the British consuls being empowered to stand security for all British merchant vessels. All these concessions were forced at the point of the bayonet, not made by the Chinese Government voluntarily. Their immediate effect was a

multiplication of armed smuggling clippers all over the coast-line of China, for extending the surreptitious trade, which now assumed all the importance of a recognised business. The farce of 'receiving ships,' where the owners and brokers deposited their opium, and whence the drug was carried away by smugglers, was kept up a little while longer. But everything was, henceforward, done formally and systematically, and not in a hurry, as before. Formerly, the opium was not examined when taken over: there was then no time for that, and the drug had to be received in good faith. But the necessity for quickness and despatch no longer existed, and the opium was now always examined before the bargain was concluded, the money not being paid till samples of the drug were smoked and approved. Many individuals, also, commenced to take part in the bargain besides the smugglers, namely: shroffs, opium-dealers, interpreters, and accountants; and, in a few years, the British merchants took greater part in the smuggling than before, by bringing up the drug in their own vessels to the open ports, which limited the operations of the native smugglers to running up the trade into the country. The British merchants thus engaged sheltered themselves under the plea of the virtual sanction of the traffic by Her Majesty's Government and the alleged insincerity of the Chinese Government in desiring to prohibit it; the Chinese Government were morally and physically helpless in the matter; the Chinese officials, who purchase their appointments and receive no pay, saw that their advantage lay in helping the trade, instead of vainly trying to thwart it; and the Chinese people, having acquired the habit of smoking the drug, were only too glad to facilitate its influx.

The business therefore went on very smoothly from 1842. The subsequent wars with China were not opium wars; there was no further necessity for going to any war with her about it. China was, in fact, already prepared for the concession which Lord Elgin asked of her in respect to opium. The policy which had been before vainly recom-

mended by Heu-Naetse, was now in the ascendant, and the proposal of Lord Elgin to include opium in the tariff of dutiable imports was accepted as a relief. This legalized an inevitable evil; but neither party was prepared to go further. Lord Elgin refused to accede to the suggestion of the merchants that the article should be included among the commodities which the foreign merchants were allowed to carry inland, being unprepared to give the trade an increased vitality; and the Chinese Government, after fixing the import duty on it at thirty *taels* (each *tael* being equal to six shillings), for one hundred *catties*, reserved to itself the right of taxing the drug further *in transitu* at any rate it pleased. By the Supplementary Convention of October, 1869, the import duty has been raised from thirty to fifty *taels*. Besides this, the foreign article pays an inland duty, which varies in different places according to the discretion of the local officers, rising at times to double the tariff duty. It also pays the *leking*, or war-tax; both these latter duties being paid by the native purchaser. But even this treble taxation has in no ways detrimentally affected the trade, and the British Government has not demurred to them because, in the interests of India and the Indian revenue, anything calculated to give the Chinese Government a benefit in the continued importation of the foreign article is considered to be so much an advantage to the trade, as supplying a motive for checking the growth of the native produce, which has already extended so greatly as to threaten the Indian traffic.

By the treaty of Tientsin of 1858, and the subsequent revision of treaties in 1869, many additional Chinese ports have been opened out, such as Chefoo, Hankow, Kewkeang, Swatow, Tientsin, etc.; additional consular establishments have been formed; a regular system of custom-house regulations adopted and enforced; and a British legation established at Peking. Every facility has thus been acquired for pushing on the trade with vigour, and the British Government has not been backward in taking advantage of the circumstance. The annual supply now,

we have seen, amounts to about ninety thousand chests, which brings to Her Majesty's coffers in India a net profit of about £6,000,0C0. At this moment the import of opium in China is equal to, if it does not exceed in aggregate, the value of all other English imports taken together. Nor is the gain to the Chinese Government, so far as revenue is concerned, inconsiderable. The import duty at fifty *taels* yields in itself a very large amount, which is enhanced immoderately by the *leking* tax and the inland duties, all of which, however, do not reach the imperial treasury.

## CHAPTER II.

### CULTIVATION OF OPIUM IN BENGAL UNDER THE MONOPOLY SYSTEM.

THE history of the poppy-plant and of the drug produced from it is not very particularly known; but it is generally understood that the plant is not a native of tropical countries, though it has been successfully reared in some of them. The fact is, that it is now cultivated in all climates, being common at the same time in the gardens of England, France, and Germany, and in those of Turkey, Asia Minor, Egypt, and Persia; though the cultivation is nowhere so extensive as in India.

The oldest notices of opium are to be found in the medical works of the Greeks. Its use was also known to the ancient Egyptians, but not apparently to the ancient Hindus. The Sanskrit name of the drug is *Akiphena,* which appears to have been borrowed from the *Afooyung* of the Chinese. It does not occur in any older work than the *Ráj Nighanta,* or Medical Dictionary, and that gives no definite details in respect to the virtues and uses of the drug.

The precise time when the cultivation of the poppy was introduced in India has not been traced; but there is no doubt that it was brought in by the natives themselves, who have all along manufactured the drug successfully without any assistance from European science or ingenuity. In fact, science and ingenuity are but little needed in its preparation; what are required being rather care and

patience, of both which the native of India has an unusually large stock. Much depends also on the state of the atmosphere; and it is on this account only that we hear so often of opium blights, and of injuries done to the crops by rain and hail-stones.

The extent of territory on which the poppy is now grown in India, and the amount of population and capital engaged in its cultivation and in the preparation of opium, are far greater than in any other part of the world. In British India the cultivation was till recently confined to the Gangetic provinces, bounded on the north by Goruckpore, on the south by Házáreebágh, on the east by Bhaugulpore, and on the west by Ágrá; but it has since been extended further in every direction except the east. Besides this, a very large proportion of the drug, or about four-ninths of the entire produce of India, is grown in Málwá, the chiefs of which are semi-independent or under British protection. No opium is now grown in any of the districts of Bengal Proper, but used to be in earlier times.

In Málwá, both the cultivation of the poppy and the production of opium are free. The traffic in the drug is also free, except that a duty is levied upon it, which originally had the character of a transit tax, and has now assumed that of an export duty, levied when the drug passes out of Bombay. The reasons which led to this arrangement have already been explained.

In Behár and Benáres, and in fact throughout all territories within British jurisdiction, the cultivation of the poppy, the preparation of opium from it, and the traffic in the drug until it is brought to Calcuttá and sold by auction for exportation, are under a strict monopoly. For the management of this monopoly, the poppy districts are divided into two agencies, called the agencies of Benáres and Behár, each worked under the control of an agent, both of whom again are under the supervision of the Board of Revenue at Calcuttá. Of the two agencies the Behár agency is the larger and more important, and in

times past sent to the market about double the quantity of drug turned out by the Benáres agency, though now, from recent extensions of cultivation in the Upper Provinces, the quotas contributed by the two establishments are more nearly equal.

Both the agencies are parcelled off into divisions, each of which generally is under the management of a sub-deputy agent; while in the divisions to which no sub-deputy agents are attached, the entire control is exercised by the agent in person. Subordinate to the sub-deputy agents are a number of responsible executive officers (natives) called *Gomastás*, each intrusted with the control of all operations conducted within a distinct sub-division, called an Opium *Kotee*, and having under him a large establishment of *jemúdárs* and *zilláhdárs*, whose duty it is to superintend personally the various steps of the cultivation.

The number of persons actually employed in cultivating the poppy is great. The chief labourers are the ryots or cultivators; but the engagement to cultivate is generally made by either the sub-deputy agent, or the *Gomastá*, on behalf of the Government, with a *Lumberdár*, or accredited agent, who has a variable number of cultivators under him. After the agreement is concluded, the *Lumberdár* receives a printed form, called a *Háth Chittee*, in which the stipulations of his contract and the penalties attached to the infringement of its provisions are set forth; and in it are entered the names both of the *Lumberdár* and his cultivators, the quantity of land which each agrees to cultivate, the acknowledgment of the sums of money paid to each in advance, and, in fact, every transaction between the *Gomastá* and the *Lumberdár*, from the time of making the agreement to the final payment for the produce and the adjustment of accounts.

The conditions being settled, the ryot applies himself to the fulfilment of his contract, whether it be voluntary on his part or otherwise; and, to enable him to do this, advances are made to him from time to time, the amount

of which reaches in aggregate often to about one half of the value of the estimated out-turn of produce. The earliest advances are made in October, to enable the ryot to prepare his lands after the heavy rains for the reception of the seed. A further advance is made when the plant is above ground. In every case the advances are made by instalments; and they almost always include loans given for the purpose of sinking wells to provide the means of irrigation, which, in fact, is one of the most important items. It is an established rule that the cultivator's accounts of one season shall be definitely settled before the commencement of the next, and no out-standing balances are allowed to lie over. When a cultivator has, from fraud, neglected to bring produce sufficient to cover his advances, the balances due by him are at once recovered, if necessary, by legal means. But in cases in which the cultivator becomes a defaulter by calamity, or from unavoidable circumstances, the permission of the Government is usually applied for and obtained to wipe off the debt.

The cultivation of the poppy requires a very superior soil in order to produce opium in perfection. The lands generally selected for it are those situated in the vicinity of villages, where the facilities for manuring and irrigation are greatest. Occasionally, where the soil is particularly rich the cultivator is able to take a crop of Indian corn, or vegetables, off the ground during the rains, and, after removal of it, to prepare the ground for the subsequent poppy sowings; but, as a rule, the soil is not equal to this double cultivation, and the poppy is the only crop raised on it during the year.

The process of cultivation and manufacture may here be briefly described. The preparation of the ground is a work of great labour. It is first, by repeated ploughings, made completely fine, while weeds and grass are carefully picked out and removed from it. The field is next parcelled off into divisions by earthen dykes or ditches, running lengthways and crossways, according to the slope and nature of the

ground. A further division into smaller squares is then made by other dykes leading from the principal ones. A pit or well is dug about ten feet deep at one end of the field, from which, by a leathern bucket, water is raised into one of the principal dykes, and thence carried into every part of the field as required. This irrigation is necessary, as the cultivation is carried on in the dry season. The poppy not being a native of the country, cannot be cultivated, like indigenous plants generally, during the hot weather and the rains. It requires the summer heat of northern latitudes to give it strength, and is, therefore, cultivated during the cold weather months, *i.e.*, from October to March, in common with wheat, barley, and European kitchen-garden vegetables. The seed is sown in November, and the juice is collected in February and March, during a period usually of about six weeks. As soon as the plants spring up, the weeding and watering commence, and are continued till the poppies come to maturity. Ten or twelve days are sufficient for the germination of the seed, but the plant takes about three-and-a-half months, to mature. In February the plant is generally in full flower, and towards the middle of that month the petals are stripped off and collected, to be used afterwards in covering the opium cakes. In a few days after, the capsules or bulbous heads attain their utmost development, when the process of collecting the juice is commenced. For this purpose the bulbs are scratched or scarified, longitudinally from the base to the summit, with a sharp eight-pointed knife, the incision being very superficial and cutting only through the rind. Each bulb is scarified from two to six times, and from these cuts the juice exudes, and is daily collected and delivered to the local officers. When the poppies are exhausted, their colour changes from green to white; and then the cultivation labours for the season are closed. The seeds contain no opium, but an oil is extracted from them which is used by the natives, both for burning in lamps and for certain culinary purposes. Of the entire seed a comfit is made,

and the dry cake after extraction of oil makes a coarse description of unleavened bread used by the most indigent classes; or it is given to cattle, or used medicinally for poultices. The stem and leaves are left standing till April and May, when becoming perfectly dry they are crushed and broken up into a coarse powder known under the name of 'trash,' in which the opium cakes when ready are packed.

The cultivation labours are followed by those of manufacture. In Turkey the juice after collection is beaten up with saliva; in Málwá it is immersed in linseed oil; but in Bengal it is merely exposed to the air in the shade, which gives it the consistence required, the watery part of the juice that will separate, which is called *passewáh*, being at the same time drained off and used in making *lewáh*, or the paste required in forming the shells of the opium cakes. During its exposure to the air the mass is regularly turned over, to insure an uniform dryage; and this process is persevered in for three weeks or a month, till the drug has nearly reached the standard consistence of seventy degrees. If the cultivator delivers his drug of this consistence, the regulated price for it is paid to him; if his article is above standard, he receives a *pro rata* increase of payment; whereas, if it is below standard, a corresponding deduction of price is made.

The treatment of the opium at the factory includes its weighment and examination by the opium examiner, and the native examiners called *Purkhyas*, the latter of whom are able to detect adulteration by merely manipulating the produce between their fingers. Where the adulteration is very great the whole drug, after further examination by the European examiner, is destroyed, and the cultivator gets nothing for the article presented by him; but where the adulteration is less extensive and the drug is not altogether useless, it is taken at half price, or under smaller penalty, and is used in making the *lewáh* or paste referred to. The approved drug is of a moderately firm texture, being of the consistence of thick jam or honey.

It is capable of receiving an impression from the finger; is of a dark yellow colour when held in the light, but nearly black in the mass; and has a strong smell, and is free from grittiness. Behár opium is about one-fourth less strong than that of Málwá—that is, contains one-fourth less of narcotic principle. This difference arises mainly from the difference of climate. The consumers in Southern China esteem the Behár drug above all others, but apparently for its aroma only. In the northern provinces of the empire the stronger drug, Málwá, is decidedly preferred.

After weighment and examination the opium is manufactured or made up into balls, which are technically called 'cakes,' and then thrown into a shell prepared of poppy leaves glued together with *lewáh* to receive it, and this being rolled in a little fine powdered 'trash,' the whole is carried out into the open air and exposed to the direct influence of the sun for three days, during which time it is frequently turned and examined, and if it becomes distended and puffy (as is often the case), the package is broken open and the gas exuded allowed to escape, after which the cake is tightly closed again. A well-finished cake has the size and appearance of a 24lb. shot; and these shots have done more mischief in China than Armstrong projectiles. The Málwá opium, which is more inspissated than that of Bengal, is dried till it can be cut into cakes, in which form it is packed off for exportation, the size of each cake being about three inches square.

The process of manufacture described above applies to opium prepared for exportation to China. With the drug intended for internal consumption, and called Abkáree opium, the process is different. This opium is brought to a consistence of ninety degrees by direct exposure to the sun. It is then converted into square bricks, a seer in weight each, which are wrapped in oiled Nepál paper. The opium thus prepared has not the same powerful aroma as that put up in balls; but it contains a larger amount of drug in a smaller compass.

As a rule the produce of the winter and spring of one season is manufactured, stored, and sent down to Calcuttá in the course of the summer, and is generally sold in the following calendar year. For a short while the value of opium increases by age; but this rule is not applicable to all kinds. Turkey opium, for instance, deteriorates rapidly if not very carefully preserved from the air; but the opium of Behár is not nearly so sensitive. Crude opium is, in every case, that is, from all out-lying stations accessible to the railway, sent by rail to the Agencies; but manufactured opium is always sent from the Agencies to Calcuttá by boats. In the case of some chests which were once brought down experimentally by rail, it was found that, though the contents were in no way damaged, the chests were so shaken that the 'trash' with which the cakes were covered had settled down, so as to leave the upper layer of cakes exposed. Since then that mode of conveyance has therefore not been attempted again.

After being brought down to Calcuttá a *ruse* is practised by the sale of the opium to individuals by auction, to exonerate the British Government of the blame of directly exporting the drug to China. But this manœuvre answers no object but a quibbling one. The opium prepared for the China market is prepared differently from that manufactured for home consumption; the law also makes it imperative on the purchaser to export it, the opium consumed in the country being sold under other conditions, through the collectorate. The object held in view by the Government is therefore manifest; and, if the traffic be unworthy and blamable, the mere trick of shirking over the blame of exporting the drug to the purchaser does not exculpate the Government. The purchasers of the drug in India are English merchants, Pársees, and Hindu bankers, chiefly of the North-Western Provinces, among whom the secondary profits are shared. The relative proportion of opium exported and consumed in the country will be understood from the following figures, which give the Bengal statistics for 1874-75:

| | RS. |
|---|---|
| (1.) Value of opium sold for consumption in India . . . . . | 15,21,899 |
| (2.) Ditto sold for Abkáree and medicinal purposes . . . . | 6,000 |
| (3.) Ditto sold for exportation . . | 5,43,16,045 |

Of the entire produce under the monopoly system, three per cent. only, it will be seen, is sold for local consumption.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE EXPORT TO CHINA.

THE circumstances under which the Indian opium trade came to be identified with the British Government have been stated at length, and the progress of the trade has been narrated step by step, from the assumption of the monopoly by the East India Company in 1773, and the direct transmission of the drug by them to China up to 1833, to the subsequent disposal of it by periodical auction sales in Calcuttá for the benefit of the Government. The policy throughout has had one object in view, which has not been materially affected by casual variations of procedure, that object being to raise the largest amount of revenue possible from China by the sale of an article best manufactured in India.

The first disturbance of this policy was caused by the introduction of Turkey opium into India by the Americans, in 1815. To prevent this from injuring the Government monopoly, a prohibitory duty was imposed on all foreign opium of twenty-four shillings per pound, if imported in British bottoms; and of forty-eight shillings per pound if imported in foreign bottoms, and this succeeded fully in putting a stop to the competition. The next difficulty that arose was the free culture in Málwá, to which we have alluded; and we have noticed how it was got over by the imposition of a heavy export duty. A third and pettier obstacle of more recent date was the import of Persian opium to Bombay, on bond, for further despatch to China.

It was at first intended to restrict this trade altogether by the imposition of a large transhipment duty; but, as it seemed unlikely that commercial enterprize would fail to establish the trade, if lucrative, in spite of such opposition, the best face was put on the matter and the trade allowed to take its course, being subjected only to the payment of a toll of fifty rupees per chest, which was as large as it could bear.

An obstacle of greater magnitude, and what gave occasion to the greatest alarm, was the report that came to India in 1848, and again in 1859, of the opium-growing capabilities of some of the Chinese districts, and especially of the province of Yunan, where much poppy was already being cultivated surreptitiously, that is, with the connivance of the local authorities. The produce of this cultivation was, according to one version, as good as, and fetched an equal price with, the Abkáree opium of Calcuttá, and it was further asserted that Bengal opium was already falling in demand there on this account. But other versions maintained that those who were choice and dainty in respect to the quality of what they smoked, preferred the foreign to the indigenous drug. Notwithstanding this assurance the Government of Bengal hastened to raise the price paid to cultivators for raw opium from Rs. 4 to 5 per seer, with a view to increase the cultivation, that, by increasing the supply at a lower rate, it might be able to swamp down all indigenous competition in China; and this has been the policy uniformly kept in view ever since. The selling price of opium, which now ranges from Rs. 1100 to Rs. 1400 a chest, can easily be raised yet further; but a high selling price is apt to induce the Chinese to cultivate more largely for themselves, to prevent which the price has purposely been kept down. The growth in China has nevertheless commenced; permissively, by the imposition of a license tax: but it is still said to have already largely increased. In Yunan especially, the cultivation has spread over the hills and the open campaign, and the opium annually produced fills several thousand

chests. The drug is also largely produced in Fuhkien, Kwantung, Chekeang, Shantung, Newchang, and Kweichow. The tax imposed on the cultivation at present is prohibitive, being cent. per cent. But, if growth without restriction is eventually determined upon, it will doubtless be considerably lowered. The Chinaman's great difficulty yet is that the opium produced by him never attains the aroma and flavour of the Indian drug, for which reason very little of the native opium is consumed in the coast-provinces, to which the foreign opium is so easily carried. But inland the locally-grown drug has much sale; and, as the quality of it is improving year by year, it may not be unable some years hence to compete more equally with the foreign drug, the trade in which, however, has not up to this time been perceptibly affected. The possibility of much further improvement of the native opium in quality is yet generally doubted, its inferiority of character being attributed to defects of climate and soil which do not admit of being got over. Even in the interior a few persons of the poorest classes only smoke it by itself, the more general practice being to mix it with and thus cheapen the Indian drug. This practice is increasing the consumption of opium generally among those classes which could not have afforded the purchase of the Indian drug in its purity. The cost of the Indian drug in the interior is very much increased by the extra taxation to which it is subjected at each of the barriers it has to pass through. As an article of open trade it is recognised only within a short distance of the treaty-ports. It has still to be either clandestinely carried inland, or to pay heavy taxes before it is permitted to go forward openly. The consequence is that only a small quantity of it is procurable in the great cities in the interior; and it is this that has stirred up the Chinese cultivator to produce largely what, after being mixed with a little of the Indian drug, is not unsmokable. It is doubtful whether, on 'the salt wherewith it is salted' being altogether left out, the indigenous drug could by itself find many consumers, or

repay the expenses of cultivation. Up to this moment the demand for the Indian drug has not decreased anywhere in consequence of the increase in native produce. It has been asserted by several people that were the entire supply of Indian opium cut off, there would not be one smoker the less in China. It may be asserted quite as authoritatively in reply, that were the supply from India cut off, the local cultivation in China would close up of itself, at all events to a great extent, as none of the higher classes would or could smoke the home-grown drug unless its quality were more largely improved.

We have shown already to what extent the produce of the Indian drug has received the attention of the British Government. We may add here that to induce the ryot to prefer the cultivation of the poppy to other crops, the price paid to him has been raised from Rs. 3·8 in 1851-52 to Rs. 5, which is now allowed to him.* The figures below show decennially the extensive increase in cultivation which this hot-house process had secured up to the end of 1871-72:

| | Beegáhs under cultivation. |
|---|---|
| 1851-52 . . . . . . | 495,171 |
| 1861-62 . . . . . . | 639,433 |
| 1871-72 . . . . . . | 891,309 |

The figures for 1874-75 are Beegáhs 883,841, and exhibit a slight decrease; but the Government is still pressing for further cultivation in every direction, and there is no doubt that the area will be increasing year by year.

This brings us to the subject of the quantity of opium which has to be provided for China, and brought forward annually for sale. This has been frequently considered by the Government. Without going back to earlier times we remark that, in 1865, it was proposed by Sir Cecil Beadon, then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, and agreed to by the Government of India, that the minimum quantity

* Very recently the price has been reduced to Rs. 4·8 per seer.

should be fixed at forty-five thousand chests. The subsequent rise of the demand in the China market led to a modification of this proposal by Sir Cecil himself, who now suggested that the limit of chests should be raised to forty-eight thousand. This was also the recommendation of his successor, Sir William Grey, who was further of opinion that a reserve of not less than ten thousand chests should be maintained to meet the deficiencies of a bad season, and that the area of cultivation should at least be sufficiently extended to produce 53,492 chests a year. All the efforts of the Government have been persistently directed to this end, and the report for 1874-75 shows that the produce of that year amounted to 51,754 chests, while the reserve of the preceding year's manufacture was 10,510 chests.

The above figures will give some idea of the rate at which the English Government has been forcing opium into China in spite of her old prohibitive laws, which were totally disregarded when they were in force, and in spite of the prohibitive duties by which she is still vainly endeavouring to keep out the poison. The British Government, it may be conceded, did not originally introduce opium into China. The Chinese knew its use, to some extent, even before the East India Company commenced to send it to them from Bengal. But there is no denying that the British Government brought to their doors drug of that quality which first made opium-smoking fashionable among them, and spread the habit like wild-fire all over the country, inducing the mandarins to connive at its being smuggled, till the import was made legal at the point of the bayonet. An excuse has often been urged that the retention of the monopoly in India by the British Government is necessary for restraining the use of the drug. But in India itself the drug is not largely used, and a free cultivation with precautionary legislation would apparently fully suffice to restrict local consumption. As for restraining the use of opium out of India, that has never been the policy of the Government, for both in

1848 and in 1859, when information was received in Calcuttá that its cultivation was being greatly extended in China, every nerve was strained to increase the supply from Bengal, with a view to provide as much poison as was wanted at the cheapest price, and so drive the China drug out of its legitimate market.

Of course the trade thus fostered could not have increased or assumed its present dimensions but for the active connivance of the officials in China. It is said that so universal was the desire there of securing a sufficient supply of opium, that many of the emperors successively, and almost all the great dignitaries of the State, winked at its introduction; and this assertion is entitled to belief from the safe internal transit of the drug all along, after it was surreptitiously landed. From year's end to year's end it was constantly carried, in small quantities indeed, but still from one extremity of the country to the other, regularly and daringly, notwithstanding all the Government edicts to the contrary, and was openly sold in the shops, which even before 1858, when the import was legalized, were, in the coast-towns at least, nearly as plentiful as they are at this moment, and quite as much as gin-shops are plentiful all over England. The sign of these receptacles is a bamboo screen hanging before the door, and this is well understood by all. Into these shops all classes flock, from the mandarin to the menial servant. No one makes a secret of the business or the practice. This certainly the Chinese Government might have checked, if they had really wished to do so. What their real policy was seems therefore hard to understand. They expressly threw all the blame of the traffic on the British Government and the British speculator; they issued prohibitory edicts periodically with great punctuality; but when the money for the drug was paid and the article safely landed in their country, they made no real efforts to prevent its diffusion among those over whom their power most undoubtedly extended.

At one time one of the chief Chinese arguments urged

against the traffic was that it drained all the sycee silver out of their country. The mischief, it was said, lay not only in what was brought into China, but also in what was taken away from it. This was the argument urged in Heu-Naetse's memorial, and the case was assuredly so at the outset, when the imports forced on the country were considerable, while its exports were petty; and it did doubtless seriously embarrass a Government that was destitute of a silver coinage, and did not know the value of paper-money. The alarm raised at this time was evidently genuine, and it was echoed loudly from all directions. But the current set in an opposite direction within a few years after, when by a brisk increase in the tea-trade the exports of China began to exceed in value the imports, inclusive of opium, which compelled the British dealer in his turn to pay down the difference of value in silver; and from this time we see all opposition in China again confined only to paper prohibitions and threats. This gave rise to the surmise that the Government most probably benefited in some indirect manner from the trade; but this it could not possibly have done to the extent it might have benefited, as it does now, by imposing a high legal duty, which it refused strenuously till the date of Lord Elgin's treaty. The loss to the exchequer, however, was probably more than made up by the gain to the private purses of the mandarins, since no other trade of the country more regularly paid its entrance than opium, even when the dues from it were not legal. No attempt was ever made to evade the bribes payable to the mandarins, which cannot be said of any legal tax in force in China; and this is all the explanation we have of their attitude in the matter.

The English policy has always been more intelligent and intelligible. The revenue realized by the monopoly retained by the Government of India is very considerable, and has the beauty of being raised, not from the producing country, but from the foreign consumer of the drug pro-

duced. British India, from its vicinity to the principal market, is in the best position to carry on the traffic successfully, and the facilities to her are all the greater on account of the fertility of her soil and the low price at which labour is available to her, which necessarily gives her many advantages not shared in by other countries. If she threw up the traffic her great fear is that it might be taken up by other countries, perhaps by the United States; as China cannot possibly rest satisfied with her home-grown supply. There is no question, however, that the system now followed can be modified. The Bombay plan yields, we have seen, a duty of Rs. 600 per chest. The Bengal plan brings in a gross average profit of about Rs. 1250 a chest, from which has to be deducted the price at Rs. 5 per seer paid to the cultivator for raw opium, and the charges of manufacture, etc. What the actual cost in Bengal comes to, including the expenses of supervision, interest of moneys advanced to the cultivators, charges for buildings, and all other incidental outlay, has never been correctly calculated. The gain by the Bengal system is therefore not very precisely known. Approximately, however, the cost per chest may be taken at Rs. 415,* and the average sale-price at Rs. 1250, which leaves a net profit of Rs. 835. The gain by the Bengal system is therefore very much greater than that by the Bombay system, and the abandonment of the first for the second may necessarily result in a rather heavy financial loss to the Government without very materially affecting the supply of the drug to China, at least at the outset, as no portion of the quantity now sent would probably be immediately withdrawn. There is no doubt, however, that the odium now attaching to the Government in the active part taken by it in the production and sale of a noxious drug, would be removed by the change. Eventually also, the amount of export may become considerably reduced. To a certain extent the use of opium in China will probably never cease, but

* Vide *Bengal Administration Report* for 1872-73.

the withdrawal of the British Government from the monopoly which benefits it so vastly may lead to the production in Bengal being reduced, and—the higher sorts of the poison becoming thus scarce—to the consumption in China being also gradually circumscribed to the most degraded of the people. The adoption of plans to secure even this result is not undeserving of consideration.

## CHAPTER IV.

### RESULTS IN CHINA.

Opium was first used in China medicinally, and a small quantity of it grown in the southern province of Yunan from the earliest times. The importation of foreign opium commenced with the opening of European commerce with the country, one of the articles introduced by that commerce being Turkey opium, which was conveyed thither from the Mediterranean. The use of the drug for purposes of intoxication appears to have begun with the Társtár conquest of China, in A.D. 1644; but, at this time, and for many years after, the quantity available for such use was very small, scarcely enough to meet the requirements of the higher mandarins. The general public still regarded the drug only as medicine, and it was in this character inserted in the tariff of Canton, and subjected to the payment of a regular duty. As an article of general commerce it rose into importance with the establishment of the British power in India, when, for the first time, India began to contribute as many as two hundred chests a year. How it came into general use as an intoxicating article is thus explained by a Chinese officer named Le: 'Opium is produced among outside foreigners, and, having been originally brought hither under the name of medicine, as a requisite for curing diseases, it was formerly permitted to be carried to Canton for sale, and hence in the regulations for the levying of duties at Canton, published by the tribunal of revenue, it is stated that for each *catty* of

opium the duty is three *candareens*. Afterwards, nefarious natives decocted from it a paste for smoking, and one having taught the method to tens, and tens to hundreds successively, each imitated in a worse degree, thus rendering it a poison of very great prevalence.'

The eyes of the Chinese Government were first opened to this practice in 1796, almost simultaneously with the measures then being taken by the British Government for the development of the trade. The use of the drug was now expressly forbidden in China under penalties which were gradually increased in severity, the importation being at the same time absolutely prohibited. The amended law of 1831 on this point was as follows: 'Let the buyers and smokers of opium be punished with one hundred blows and condemned to wear a wooden collar for two months. Then let them declare the seller's name, that he may be seized and punished; and, in default of his discovering the vendor, let the smoker be again punished with one hundred blows and three years' banishment as being an accomplice. Let mandarins and their dependents who buy and smoke opium be punished more seriously than others; let governors of provinces be required to give security that there are no opium-smokers within their jurisdictions; and let a joint memorial be sent in representing the conduct of those officers who have connived at the practice.' Every cake of opium that was introduced into the country after the enactment of these stringent regulations was necessarily forced on it in defiance of its laws, though not without an active connivance on the part of its own chief officers, who however did not condemn the crime of importation the less, if they helped to establish it. This much at least is certain, that it is the opium trade that has given the Chinese Government its strongest justification for the exclusion of foreigners, led the European character to be so long regarded with distrust, rendered the risks of collision constant, and deferred a closer connection with European civilisation by retarding the diffusion of useful knowledge. It is almost equally

certain that if the arts and sciences of Europe are ever to be introduced into China, if railroads, steam-vessels, and telegraph lines are to be utilized there as largely as in other parts of the world, then must that trade sooner or later be finally abandoned. Nay, even on the more selfish and commonplace ground of commercial expediency the abandonment of the traffic is daily becoming more and more imperative to the best interests alike of Great Britain and China. It will be remembered that Sir Rutherford Alcock has himself acknowledged that concessions in respect to the import of opium would have enabled him to secure almost any terms from the Chinese in the treaty he negotiated for the admission of English commodities into their country.

We view the question first in its commercial aspect, because that, we think, will be best understood by all classes of Englishmen. It is the opium policy of Great Britain primarily that has estranged China from Europe, and prevented the natural course of trade by embarrassing it. China was not so closed to foreigners in ancient times as it was till recently, that is, before it was forced open with an armed hand. Of its own administrators the most suspicious were the Mantchou Tártárs, who, having conquered the country, were anxious to keep out from it all who might possibly disturb the feeling of accord they had established between the conquered and their conquerors. The same fears that made the East India Company shut up India during the first days of its sovereignty from adventurers and interlopers, actuated the Mantchou dynasty in prohibiting the ingress of foreigners; but even these received the peaceable and well-ordered Arab merchants in their day without much distrust. The first of the European Powers that appeared in China were the Portuguese, who were followed by the Dutch and the English; and the perpetual hostility which was kept up between these different parties only established the necessity of excluding them all from the country in the estimation of the Chinese Government. The alarm was completed when opium

appeared on the scene. From that time the Chinese ceased to believe in the integrity and rectitude of the foreign dealers, and if they continued their intercourse with them at all, it was only because it was not in their power to do otherwise.

Of all Europeans the English have always stood in the worst position in China, only on account of this traffic and the bickerings it has given rise to. The petition of Heu-Naetse especially referred to this, by stating that 'while all the nations of the West have had a general market open to their ships for upwards of a thousand years, the dealers in opium were the English alone.' It was also remarked by Heu-Kew, that 'while in their own country no opium was smoked, the barbarians yet sought to poison therewith the people of the central flowery-land.' The measures, moreover, by which the trade was furthered were not, as we have seen, at all times very straightforward. The British flag was treated with respect till, by its own conduct, it ceased to deserve it, and we all know that opium was the spark that exploded the mine on the occasion of the first war with China.

Viewed then in this aspect only, the loss to Great Britain from her opium policy is very great. The market of China is an extensive one for the sale of her general merchandise, and that market, even though it has been compulsorily opened, is still, to a great extent, inaccessible to her on account of this traffic. It is true that China herself prepares all the articles she needs for local use; but it is simply absurd to imagine that Manchester, which undersells the whole world, could not vie with the Chinese in products of fair trade. Woollen manufactures of all kinds, broadcloths, camlets, and other stuffs of the same descriptions, are already in great requisition in China; the demand for cotton piece-goods, such as white and gray shirtings, English drills, and T cloths is still greater; and the Chinese are such exact judges of quality that it is not at all likely that they would shut their eyes to the superior manufactures of Great Britain merely from a

prejudice for their own. From Eastern countries they take nothing but rough produce, simply because their own manufactures are much superior to those of the places in their immediate neighbourhood; but they are already purchasing largely from Great Britain and America all articles which they cannot produce as cheaply and well. A taste for these articles had of course to be created, and has been created already to a great extent. But China will never fully open her market to British goods till her distrust of the importer of opium is removed. The regulation of the matter rests entirely with the Chinese Government, and as soon as that Government is convinced that the British merchant has no longer any nefarious ends to attain, that moment the restrictions still operating to his disadvantage are sure to be withdrawn. An advance to this end has been made, to some extent, since the opening of the treaty-ports. Europeans, once confined to Canton only, and subsequently to five ports, whence an incursion beyond their limits was a perilous adventure, are now dwelling in practical safety and carrying on their commercial operations almost all along the coast line, egress to Peking itself having been opened to them. But the interior of the country is yet all but hermetically sealed, and is likely to remain so till full assurance is given that with the foreigner opium will not get in there. The withdrawal from the opium trade will also act beneficially in another way. At present the consumption of opium contracts the means of the Chinaman to purchase more largely the comforts and conveniences of civilised life. This is true of the alcohol-drinker in England, and in this respect the result in both places is alike. The removal of the impediment would necessarily make general trade more free.

We now come to evils of greater magnitude—namely, the moral evils to which the traffic in opium has given birth. The manner in which opium is consumed differs very much at different places. In Europe the drug is, for the most part, chewed and eaten; in India it is generally

swallowed; in China, on the contrary, it is smoked, the last being absolutely the worst way of taking it. The process followed is nearly this. The opium being taken out of its shell is boiled in water, and what will not dissolve is rejected as impure. The water is then evaporated, till the drug is brought again to its original inspissated condition, and this becomes the smokable extract. A little of this is taken and laid on a *kulkee*, a tin or silver perforated holder which fits into a long reed-pipe, and the drug being ignited the pure white flame is drawn through the pipe in whiffs—two, three, or four of which are enough to produce an exhilaration to last through the day. It is this exhilaration which the British traffic has spread throughout China, from the palace to the hovel, which one party regards to be almost as harmless as tobacco-smoking and a necessary stimulant for the working classes, while another views it as much more injurious than dram-drinking.

No demonstrative evidence of statistics is available to settle definitively the important question at issue; but that the effects of opium-smoking are baleful enough is certain from the very serious attention the matter has always received from the Chinese Government. That Government has at all times and uniformly prohibited the use of the drug in the country, regarding the indulgence as a vice, and not either as a harmless luxury or a necessary stimulant; and there is no doubt that it has always been sincere both in its opinion and its prohibitions. It, in fact, gave proof of this at one time by refusing to legalize the trade when it might have done so with a large increase of revenue; and, if that course has since been adopted, it is only because the Chinese Government had no option but to accept the terms which were dictated to it by Lord Elgin, with Sir Hope Grant at his back. The official reports of China always speak of the opium-smokers as 'idle, lazy vagrants,' and in this testimony the most un-according parties agree. During the Taeping rebellion the patriot leaders prohibited the use of opium as strin-

gently as the Cabinet of Peking had ever done before—namely, under pain of death; expressly declaring that foreigners were perfectly welcome to go through the length and breadth of the land, but on one condition, *i.e.*, with the exclusion of opium. Even the opium-smoker himself confesses freely that the habit he has acquired is very bad for him; his only excuse for continuing it being that he cannot help himself. The approaches of the temptation are represented on all hands as being very insidious. A man is sick, and a friend or poverty recommends opium, and he falls into the snare; or a man seeks pleasure, and a small quantity of the drug is given to him to smoke which exhilarates him, and induces him to stick to the practice till he is unable to do without it. The following dialogue, extracted from an old number of the *Calcutta Review*, refers to cases of the first kind: '"Why do you smoke, old woman? Is it not very bad?" "I am sick; take it to cure me." "Why do you not go to a doctor?" "Alas! I have no money."' The best elucidation of cases of the second kind was given in a counterpart of Hogarth's 'Rake's Progress,' consisting of a set of pictures painted by a Chinese artist, to illustrate the effect of opium-smoking on a young gentleman of fortune. The first of these pictures depicted the young man as in the enjoyment of perfect health and vigour, and an abundance of wealth. The second, third, fourth, and fifth of them exhibited the stages of degeneracy brought on him gradually by the use of opium; while the last represented a sot reduced to the lowest state of poverty, dragging out from day to day a miserable existence. Representations of this nature indicate clearly in what light the vice has always been regarded in China; and a more competent opinion than that derived from indigenous sources is scarcely to be looked for. The evil effects of the drug are thus pithily summed up by a Chinese mandarin: 'Loss of appetite; loss of strength; loss of money; loss of time; loss of longevity; and loss of virtue, leading to profligacy and gambling.' There is no doubt

that the habitual consumers cease to be thrifty, active, honest, and useful members of society, which the Chinese in ordinary course usually are; and this has been most generally attested to by Chinese writers, both official and otherwise.

The evidence of the British visitors to China is very conflicting, from their all being personally interested on one side of the question or the other. Taking up the old books before us, we find in Mr. Mudie's pages the statements that intoxication is a vice little known in China, and that scarcely ever is any individual to be seen in it in a state of inebriety; that opium-smoking is confined to persons of rank or wealth only, as the drug is too costly for the common people; and that the quantity of opium grown in the country itself, with that smuggled into it, is much too small for its use being very general even among the rich. Mr. Meadows, for some time a Government interpreter at Hong Kong, still more naïvely observes that 'smoking a little opium daily is like taking a pint or two of ale, or a few glasses of wine; smoking more opium is like taking brandy, as well as beer and wine; smoking very much opium is like excessive brandy and gin drinking, leading to *delirium tremens* and premature death.' As to the morality or otherwise of such conduct, he sees no difference; he only observes that the opium-smoker is not so violent, maudlin, and disgusting as the drunkard. A man of his experience, however, could not fail to discover that the opium-smoker is unable to give up his habit even at the first stage with as much ease and impunity as the consumer of a pint or two of ale. He alludes to this by saying that when once the habit of opium-smoking is acquired, the smoker is unable to discontinue his daily whiffs without extreme discomfort; and yet he does not seem to admit the pernicious effects of the habit at all. Almost to the same effect is the testimony of Mr. Crawford in his *Inquiry into some of the Principal Monopolies of the East India Company*, which was published in 1830. He says that the Behár opium, which is the weakest

and most palatable, is the 'claret or burgundy of China, the Málwá, which is stronger, 'represents hermitage to the consumer,' and the Turkey, which is the strongest and least pleasant of all, 'is vulgar port.' More recently, Messrs. Jardine, Matheson, and Company, well known for their connection with the opium trade, expressly mentioned that the use of the drug, far from being a curse, was a comfort and benefit to the hard-working Chinaman. The burden of all evidence in this view is that opium is the only national stimulant known in China; that, used in moderation, it causes a pleasant and somewhat intoxicating sensation which absorbs all care and anxiety; and that its effects have not been so demoralizing as is usually represented, the mass of the Chinese population being well-formed, steady, and sober, who take their whiff only to be able to get through their labours. It is true, it is urged, that the Chinese Government had hitherto always prohibited the import, but that was only because it did not understand the principles of trade; it is true also, that the use of the drug in the country was interdicted, but that interdiction was virtually vitiated by the conduct of the Government, which connived at the surreptitious import of the poison, doubtless after having discovered that it was not only not harmful, but absolutely beneficial in its effects. The British Government knows that the abuse of alcoholic liquors leads to *delirium tremens*, but does not disallow their importation into Great Britain on that account; and there is no better reason why the import of opium into China should be put a stop to.

On the other side, we have overwhelming evidence to establish that the use of opium in China has been attended with the most baneful results. It is admitted that the moderate use of the drug is a pleasant stimulant; but it is urged that in no stage of moderation does it cease to be hurtful. Even those who use the drug in small doses suffer very much if they are prevented from taking it at their usual time; their sufferings increase if the duration of abstinence is prolonged, till at last it becomes really

painful. As a medicine it is, like all other poisons, of great value, since it diminishes pain, soothes irritation, and procures repose. But it is totally unsuited for habitual use even in small quantities, and does not at all resemble tobacco-smoking, in which case the smoke is merely taken into the mouth and puffed out again; while, in the case of opium, the fumes are inhaled into the lungs by a deep drawn breath and retained as long as possible, there acting on the nervous fibres that are spread over the extensive membrane which lines every cell of the lung. It does not even resemble dram-drinking, because opium, when smoked, affects the nervous system directly, while wines and spirits are first received into the digestive system and act through it on the nerves; besides which the intoxication of opium creates a periodical longing for itself, which can only be assuaged by the use of it at the regular time, which the drunkard does not feel to the same, or nearly to the same extent. Nor must the drunkard's own argument in justification of his habit be forgotten. No nation, says he, has advanced in civilisation that has not made use of fermented liquors; while those that have used opium have always decayed and perished.

To us it appears that the opinions adverse to the use of opium are exceedingly well-grounded. The victim of opium is its slave. The immediate visible effects of it on the system when taken, are that it increases the fulness and force of the pulse, augments the heat of the body, and invigorates both the corporeal and mental functions for the time, exhilarating even to intoxication; but this exhilaration is always followed by lassitude and sleep. Large doses call up frightful dreams and fears, and result eventually in emaciation, loss of appetite, sickness, and drowsiness; while continued use, which introduces the consumer into a world of dreams, and lulls pain, misery, and even utter desolation for the time, also inevitably leads him to awful consequences—to convulsions, apoplexy, and death. But even where the consumer does not hazard to this extent, the strength is always undermined, and a

habit formed which can never be thrown off. The alcohol-drinker can do without his dose at the usual hour. If the opium-smoker does not get his pipe at the accustomed time his limbs become debilitated, a discharge of rheum comes out from his eyes and nose, and he is unequal to any exertion till the use of the drug revives him. A more helpless creature than the opium-smoker without his whiff cannot, in fact, be imagined. If the drug is long withheld the consequences are invariably fatal. There are hundreds of instances of alcohol-drinkers having reformed and abandoned their old habits. But the habit of opium-smoking once fairly formed, can never be given up. So long as opium is smoked in moderation the effects may not be remarkable; but those who have inspected the opium dens are almost unanimous in opinion that, although more quiet prevails in them than in a London gin-palace, the grovelling sensualist is greatly more painful to look at than the violent drunkard. There are, of course, men who smoke opium for many years without apparent injury, just as many men consume large quantities of spirits for a long time seemingly with impunity. But in both cases generally the reckoning comes at last, and always with fearful effect; the drunkard having this advantage, that he can, if he tries to do so, avoid this fatal issue, which the opium-smoker cannot. Being more seductive and more tenacious than spirits, the effects of opium in the long-run are necessarily more dangerous.

The following passage, extracted from the report of Choo-Tsun, exhibits the question in a particular phase which is not unworthy of consideration: 'Opium was first introduced in Kaoutsinne, which by some is supposed to be the same as Kalápá (Bataviá). The natives of this place were at first sprightly and active, and being good soldiers were always successful in battle. But the people called Rungmaon (red-haired) came thither, and, having manufactured opium, reduced some of the natives into the habit of smoking it. From thence the mania for it rapidly spread throughout the whole nation; so that in process of

time the natives became feeble and enervated, submitted to foreign rule, and ultimately were completely subjugated. Now, the English are of the race called Rungmaon. In introducing opium into this country, their purpose has been to weaken and enfeeble the Central Empire. If not early aroused to a sense of our danger, we shall find ourselves ere long on the last step towards ruin.' How well-founded Choo-Tsun's apprehensions were will be readily admitted by those who have fought with Chinese soldiers on three different occasions. The Chinese army was invariably found to be an assemblage of demoralized, ruffianly, and haggard sensualists, without any discipline or physical stamina: the English drunkards never appear in the same light. An old opium-smoker, soldier or not, presents in all countries the awful spectacle of a framework of bones, covered with some dried-up muscles, and clothed in a shrivelled skin. The picture of Death has, in fact, been painted after him in every land.

Nor is the argument that opium is the only national stimulant of China, and should for that reason be allowed to remain so, absolutely or nearly accurate. The national stimulants of the country for the last four thousand years have been tea, tobacco, wine, and spirits. Opium-smoking in it, to any considerable extent, is only of recent growth—scarcely more than a century old. It has certainly made very considerable progress—particularly in the coast provinces, which were exposed to the attacks of the British merchant: but, if the supply could even now be reduced, the rising generation of China may yet be saved from its effects, though, at the rate the traffic has been increasing, there is very little hope indeed for them. The desire has been excited throughout the land, and the demand has kept pace fully with the supply. The average dose used is about twenty grains weight per man per day, but ranging from ten to one hundred grains; and the ninety thousand chests exported from India, leaving aside the home-grown drug, necessarily provide a regular supply of poison for nearly fourteen millions of souls. We give

the statistics as we find them; but the reader will remember that the morality or immorality of the traffic is not affected by its extent. It is just or unjust alike whether it demoralizes one million of men or fourteen millions. Its effects are summed up by Mr. Medhurst in his work on China, by the awful statement that the Chinese increased at the rate of three per cent., per annum, before the commencement of the traffic, but since then have done so at the rate of one per cent. only.

Here we must point out that the Chinese, like the Hindus, are naturally a sober people, not in need of much excitement, and whom undue excitement would discompose. The mass of the people are muscular and well-formed, and capable of great and prolonged exertion in their own way, without requiring any kind of stimulant beyond the gentler narcotics easily available to them, such as areca, tobacco, coffee, and tea. Their disposition is cheerful and peaceable; even the lower orders are not very quarrelsome: and when we read of a Chinaman having run a muck, whether it be in China or in India, we always find upon inquiry that he was goaded to it by his whiff of opium. A large dose of opium has the credit of producing a kind of madness, of which the effects are dreadful, especially when the mind is troubled by jealousy, desire of vengeance, or any other violent passion.

## CHAPTER V.

### RESULTS IN INDIA.

THE consumption of opium in India is very inconsiderable, and the direct evils from the use of it here, therefore, scarcely require notice. In this country the drug is *swallowed*, and that again is less injurious than the Chinese practice of smoking it. Even the habit of swallowing however, on being once contracted, cannot be abandoned; and, if no disorders have arisen from this source in India, it is only because the people here are very abstemious, and the quantity of drug used by them is very small.

The above remarks are not applicable to Assam, where opium was till lately largely consumed, and where its effects were felt as a plague. It depopulated the country and degenerated the people; and, from having once been a fine manly race, the Assamese have now become absolutely the most abject and worthless in all India. The growth of population among them was checked by it; the men became prematurely old; the women bore fewer children; and the children rarely lived to become old men. No greater boon has therefore been conferred on that province than the prohibition to cultivate opium in it. But the case of Assam is altogether exceptional, as the population of it is Indo-Chinese. The Bengalis differ from the Assamese in several respects, and very particularly in respect to the use of opium; and the people of the Behár districts, where opium is grown and manufactured for the

Government, have even a less hankering for the drug than the people of Bengal. No evils from this source, therefore, have yet arisen in those parts of the Presidency; and elsewhere in India opium is neither swallowed nor smoked, except in the semi-independent States of Rájpootáná, where the evils are almost as great as they were in Assam.

Nor does the manipulation of the drug in any way affect injuriously the cultivators and manufacturers of it. The *Purkhyas*, or native examiners, sit daily with their hands immersed in opium for not less than nine hours without feeling any inconvenience from it beyond an occasional sense of numbness in the fingers, which may be the mere result of fatigue; and in the caking vats the manufacturers are employed knee-deep through the drug, or remain standing in it serving it out, for equally long intervals, without experiencing anything more serious than a sense of drowsiness towards the end of the day, which sends them off early in the evening to sleep; the effects not being complained of in either case as unpleasant or injurious.

The evils noticeable in India are those of the monopoly system, and we derive our best argument against it from Choo-Tsun's report, to which we have already several times referred. In it, in combating the proposal of cultivating opium largely in China with a view to beat out the foreigners by competition, he wisely observes as follows: 'The poppy needs a rich and fertile soil. If all the rich and fertile ground be used for planting it, and if the people, hoping for a large profit therefrom, madly engage in its cultivation, where will the flax and the mulberry be cultivated; where wheat and rye?' This difficulty has actually arisen in India. The forced production of the poppy, which would not have been entered upon so largely but for the advances of money made to the ryots, has undoubtedly displaced from some of the finest lands the crops of indigo, sugar-cane, and wheat which used to be raised in them previously. 'To draw off in this way,' continues the Chinese statesman, 'the waters of the great

fountain requisite for the production of food and raiment, and to lavish them upon the root whence calamity and disorder spring forth, is an error which may be compared to that of the physician who, when treating a mere external disease, should drive it inwards to the heart and centre of the body.' And so have the Indians found it. They have cultivated the poppy to the neglect of food-grains, and the fears of scarcity and famine in the country are necessarily constant.

The inducements offered for this purpose by the Government are perhaps not absolutely *unfair;* but they are very seductive, and have designedly been made so. The advance of money without interest, which is one of them, is an offer which no capitalist but the Government can make in India; and it is a bait which an indigent people are at all times ready to snap at with alacrity. It is not that the cultivator in any case receives the advance only for his love for the cultivation. He is always in want of ready money, and cannot refuse it when offered, however difficult may be the condition attached to it. Is the Government ignorant of this weakness on the part of its ryots? We think not; or, if ignorant of it, there is no excuse for such ignorance. The inducement is of course not illegal, but it becomes in its operation oppressive; it ties down the ryot where a little more liberty would be immensely beneficial, both to himself and the country.

Nor is this the only objection to the advance system; there are many others. The intervention of the *Lumberdár* in entering into engagements on behalf of the ryot, enables him to put in whatever names he chooses as those of his sub-cultivators. Theoretically, of course, it is understood that the engagement is optional on the part of the ryot; practically many men come to be registered as having agreed to it who had not the remotest idea of doing so. The *Lumberdár* accepts his own position as a profitable one, and picks out names of parties who, he knows, could cultivate the drug if they wished it. Their unwillingness to do so is not an impracticable difficulty to

him, for he knows how the pressure on them is to be applied. In theory there is no compulsion in the matter at all; in practice it is nothing but compulsion from beginning to end. The simple plan followed for bringing round all recusants is to throw the advance-money into their houses, or to tie it up in their clothes. There is the agreement, said to be signed by a man who does not know how to sign or what a signature implies; and there is the patent proof of his voluntary engagement in the fact of his having received the advance! The ryot sees no way of getting out of the difficulty; attributes it to his *nusseeb* (fate); and sits down to cultivate what he understands the *hákeem* (Government) desires him to grow.

That the cultivation is not unremunerative to the ryot may be allowed, notwithstanding the many complaints received from time to time that it is made so by the exactions of the subordinate officers of the department, through whose hands both the advances and the final payments are made. The inquiries made by the Government have invariably gone to establish that all such complaints are without foundation, and that the cultivation is so remunerative that it is eagerly sought after, particularly by those who know it by experience, and are necessarily anxious to increase their stake in it; but those conversant with Mofussil doings in India generally give a different story. The refund of advances particularly is said to be so harshly enforced as to cause the ruin of many cultivators, and to have even led in times past to the sale or pawning of their children to stave off their personal danger. It is possible that there may be some exaggeration in such representations, but there is none in the statement that a good part of the money due to the ryot goes to the disbursing officers of the department as the perquisite of their office, for this was unanimously deposed to by the higher officers of the department before the Indigo Commission, with this qualification, that the portion retained by the disbursing officers was said by them to be very small. The *Bengal Administration Report* for 1872-73

notices both the subjects of compulsory cultivation and the deductions made from the price due for opium to the cultivators, in connection with certain proceedings in Jhánsi, where it was complained that so much as two annas in the rupee, or one-eighth of the entire price, was kept back. The inquiry made by the opium agent proved the complaints to be idle. This is always the result of such investigations; but there is no smoke without something at bottom in the shape of fire, and it may fairly be taken for granted that complaints of this nature, though often exaggerated, are almost invariably well founded.

Besides these evils, the monopoly system necessarily exposes the cultivator to constant espionage and the suspicion of his retaining a part of his produce for illicit sale, which leads to great and unnecessary oppression. Bribery is the unavoidable consequence of this state of things; the cultivator is obliged to buy off the policeman who has the power of intruding on his privacy. An appeal to justice is of course nominally open to all; but, in the first place, the cultivator has no time to seek for it, and, secondly, an appeal where the Government is virtually the defendant is simple mockery. The natives employed in watching receive small wages, but are nevertheless all known to live well, certainly in excess of their avowed income. The natural inference is that dishonesty and oppression are much resorted to; and the system certainly allows of both.

In a sanitary point of view the ill effects of the periodical gathering of the opium cultivators in particular places at the time of the opium weighments has been often brought to the notice of the Government. The Government of the North-Western Provinces explicitly complained of the gatherings at Gházeepore, which were described as perfect nuisances and calculated to give rise to epidemic diseases. But the arrangement could not be altered; the cultivators themselves liked it best, and the Government also preferred it, as allowing of closer supervision over the native establishment than could be exercised by any other plan; and

so it has been continued against all objections, with the enforcement of such conservancy regulations as, under the circumstances of the case, were practicable. In a country subject to such scourges as cholera, plague, and infectious fevers, this is not a very petty evil by itself.

All that can be said in favour of the monopoly system is this, that it sends out the opium it supplies in uniform good condition, while free-trade would let loose on the market all descriptions of produce; but this certainly is not an argument of much force. It would not be a very great evil if the opium used were of weaker quality; and, after all, the quality of the article he requires is best regulated by the demand of the consumer. Under a free system it is possible that the use of the drug in the producing country might become more extensive than it now is. We have mentioned already that in Assam much mischief was done when the cultivation of opium was free. But the people of Bengal generally are not so fond of indigenous stimulants as the people of Assam; opium they have never liked much; *gánjá* (hemp), which is a greater favourite, is not very largely consumed: if they have shown any predilections in this way, they are rather for brandy and rum. Besides that, any apprehension of the use of opium becoming fashionable can easily be obviated by not leaving the local sale absolutely free. Nay, it appears to us, that, with a few careful rules and regulations, the result of a free system would probably tell the other way. The poppy will doubtless continue to be grown, but not nearly to its present extent. In the absence of seasonable advances it is not possible for the ryot to cultivate it, as it requires considerable expense to manure and irrigate the soil to the extent required. Persons possessing capital could of course carry on the cultivation; but no one has ever done so, and no one probably ever will. If its local consumption and exportation, then, are both hampered by salutary laws and prohibitive duties, it may soon cease to be as profitable as other cultivations, which would necessarily lead to its

being gradually abandoned. The lands now employed in the cultivation, which are especially rich and fertile, would thus become again available for the production of more useful and not less remunerative crops; and, while we shall cease to poison China, the great bugbear of a diminution of profits to our own ryots would be easily avoided, and the constant fears of scarcity staved to a perceptible extent. The Government, however, would necessarily be a loser in revenue. Even without a reduction of produce the mere adoption of the Bombay system would probably tell seriously on the coffers of the State; unless the loss could be recouped in some other way by general taxation.

## CHAPTER VI.

### FINAL REMARKS.

We have established, with sufficient clearness we think, that the opium monopoly, as it now stands, cannot be defended either on moral or political grounds. Its only defence is the one commercial plea of large profits realized from a foreign country, to the great relief of the people of India. For the sake of these profits the British Government has nearly for a hundred years designedly and deliberately contravened the laws of a foreign State to sell interdicted poison among its subjects, and, persisting in this course, has eventually compelled that State to legalize the trade, so far as the imposition of an import duty on the drug has done so. The *ruse* by which the British Government has avoided the discredit of being the actua smuggler has been noticed; but, virtually, that has been the character in which it has exhibited itself throughout; or, at all events, that is the light in which its character has been estimated both in India and China. The morality of the course it has pursued does not admit of defence, nor has the British Government itself ever ventured to defend its policy on moral grounds. The wisdom of its position is, if possible, still less defensible, seeing as we do that, while every part of the world is now mutually open for traffic and friendly communication, China has, on account of this unfortunate traffic mainly, shown no disposition to be equally friendly to us, and that all the concession she

has made in this respect has been extorted from her by the one unanswerable argument of force. And yet, this was not at all times the deportment of China, as is usually supposed. In ancient times, before the Mahomedans came to India, there was constant communication between the Hindus and the Chinese, both by sea and land, and there existed a royal road to connect their respective countries through the passes of Assam. Even the Arab merchants were allowed to trade with China freely before the merchants of Europe arrived there with their contraband drugs. Here a wise and liberal policy has been entirely sacrificed to a low mercantile spirit which at one era of their existence characterized all the speculators from Europe, which may be described as 'acquisition of money at any cost.' This was the feature of the English Government in India for a long time. It has now ceased to be so; and there is no reason why the last vestige of it in the connection of Great Britain with China should not also disappear.

We have noticed already where the real difficulty of the question lies. If the opium monopoly is given up, how is the money now derived from it to be recouped? The Government in India will and must stand out for an undiminished revenue; the people of India already complain loudly of being over-taxed. How then are the two ends to be brought together? The abandonment of the monopoly will not, we have shown, injuriously affect the ryot in the slightest degree; the cultivation of his lands with other crops will yield him at least as much as, if not considerably more than, the amount he now actually receives by cultivating the poppy. But to the Government there will be the immediate loss between the revenue realized under the present system and that which a prohibitive duty, like that now in force in Bombay, would yield. Approximately calculated this, even if the cultivation does not decrease, will amount to about £1,128,000:

| | RS. |
|---|---|
| 48,000 chests at (Rs. 1250-415) Rs. 835 per chest . . . . . . . . | 4,00,80,000 |
| 48,000 chests at Rs. 600 per chest . . | 2,88,00,000 |
| Difference . . . | Rs. 1,12,80,000 |
| | £1,128,000 |

It will be yet more when the cultivation shrivels up and causes a diminution in the number of chests to send. All this will be India's loss—loss to the people if they have to make up the deficiency in taxes. It is here, therefore, that the shoe pinches. The gain to Great Britain herself by the abandonment of the monopoly must, sooner or later, be immense; that is, as soon as it succeeds in removing from the Chinaman all his suspicions of the red-haired barbarian, and induces him in perfect good faith and friendliness to open out the whole of his country fully for the purposes of traffic. This consummation cannot be doubted; it would be unreasonable not to expect it: and then the woollens and cottons of Great Britain, which have already pierced every other quarter of the globe, will have another immense field to permeate, from which they are now in a great measure shut out. But what will be England's gain will be India's loss. How is that loss to be made up? Give up the monopoly and realize the difference of revenue by taxing the people of India, will be the prompt suggestion from all sides. But can that suggestion be carried out?

One thing is certain, namely, that no fiscal consideration can justify the British Government in continuing to inflict on China the grievous evil that the diffusion of opium in that country has given rise to. No Government ought to make private vice a source of public revenue; and to this principle may be added another equally correct, that no part of the revenues of India ought to be realized from a foreign country. Such a revenue, under the best circumstances, could only be precarious, and no revenue can be more precarious than the opium revenue now actually is.

It is not impossible that it may vanish all at once when it can least be spared. There is a forecast already of what China may do in despair. The effect of its sudden cessation would be exceedingly perplexing. Is it impossible to devise means for the timely prevention of such embarrassment?

This is a purely financial question which need not be discussed in this essay at all. We have referred to it simply that our other observations may not be misunderstood. India cannot be taxed further without aggravating the perplexities of her present position; there must be no jump from the frying-pan into the fire. The prospective gain by the opening out of China will be not India's in the remotest degree, but Great Britain's alone. This should induce Great Britain to deal liberally with India, and give up all the indirect earnings now derived by her from the latter in a thousand different ways, which would more than fully cover the loss of her opium revenue. The abandonment of the opium policy of Great Britain absolutely requires the fullest justice being done to the Indian Empire, and when that is conceded the two ends of the account will easily meet.

# APPENDIX.

# HALF-HOURS WITH NATURE;

OR,

# EXPLORATIONS FOR THE TRUTH.*

## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE author of these pages has often been asked to vindicate his religion. If he is not a Christian, nor a Mahomedan, nor a Buddha, nor a Hindu, what is he? And to this challenge he is anxious to give a distinct reply.

His case, he believes, is not singular. There are many people in the world who do not believe in any revelation beyond (1) the revelation of God in the visible creation, and (2) the revelation of His moral nature in our consciences. All other revelations appear to them to be, not impossible, but unnecessary. The revelations that speak with an assumption of authority as: 'Thus saith the Lord!' seem to them to be intrinsically less persuasive than the revelations which simply indicate what God has done, and how His acts are to be understood. The pages of Nature tell us directly of God, of a moral law and a life

* This paper has no connection whatever with those which precede it, and its appearance in this place, as an *Appendix*, demands therefore a word of explanation. The author's excuse is simply this: One of his reviewers has already pronounced him to be a sceptic; another, that he is a Christian. He is anxious to say that he is neither; and takes the first opportunity that offers to do so.

to come; and reason and conscience instruct us how to work out that moral law for our well-being both here and hereafter. What more then do we want? It is certainly simpler to believe directly from what we see that God is good and powerful, than indirectly that He is so because it is so stated in some particular book which, on the force of contested evidence, professes to have come down from Him. The method observed in the latter is doubtless both short and easy, but for that very reason more repulsive than inviting. 'This has been so ordered;' 'this other thing is forbidden;' 'if you do what you are told to do you go to heaven;' 'if you do not do what you are told to do you go to hell:' such are the blunt dogmas enunciated by all book-religions in common. But the voice of Nature is more reasonable and less peremptory; it imparts instruction with gentleness and kindness, and deals out no threats but what its teachings may seem to imply. True religion is God's affair, much more so than ours; and He is sure to lead us right in His own way in the end. But the absolute truth cannot yet be known to us, notwithstanding the dictatorial tone arrogated by this and that particular religion. The light of Nature is therefore our best guide under the circumstances. We feel certain that we shall be judged by it, each according to the beam that lightens his path; and the necessity for accepting any other guide is not equally self-evident.

It is for these reasons that we do not seek, ask for, or accept any revealed religion whatever. The book of Nature we hold to be enough for all purposes; and, as it is open to all, and can be understood by all, we do not want any other, either to take its place or to confirm its reading. The being and general attributes of God can, in fact, only be demonstrated from Nature, since revelation to be trustworthy must come from God after His attributes have been proved. A revelation makes nothing true; it professes only to be an attestation of the truth. The truth must have independent rank and place; no attestation of it can constitute a truth. What was not true before can-

not be made true by any revelation; what was contradictory to reason before cannot be made reasonable by it. If the mind refuse the proofs offered by Nature, then and then only could the testimony of other revelations be required—that is, if they could in such case carry any weight. We hold that our position is not so bad as that; that the revelation of Nature is the best and fullest of all revelations; that it can be read by all and be misread by none. Science may understand it better than unaided human reason; but it is sufficiently clear even to unaided reason for all the edification we actually stand in need of. Of this book, says Volney: 'It is primitive, immediate, universal, invariable, evident, reasonable, just, and of itself sufficient.' Locke also says: 'There is a law of nature as intelligible to a rational creature as the positive law of commonwealths.' Why then should we need another? The proof of revealed religions is limited to revelations to particular persons, at particular times and places; the proof of natural religion is available to everyone, and at all hours. The former we receive mainly by faith; the latter by reason alone. 'The first principle of religion,' says Bacon, 'is right reason.' Reason is, in fact, the only faculty by which we can judge of anything whatever, not excepting religion. Are we wrong then when we accept that as our guide in preference to faith, which we may or may not command?

The really sound Christian does not consider Christianity to be distinct from Natural Religion, but only its explanatory and confirmatory supplement; and a very similar sentiment is largely shared in by most of the other religionists of the day. But those who are not born Christians, Bráhmans, or Mahomedans, may well doubt the necessity of any such supplement. God has given His works and the means of studying them to all; and, if the proofs in them be obvious, why should we ask for more? All other revelations prove themselves by miracles. We do not say that miracles are impossible; we cannot say so, for almost everything we see around us is miraculous. But we do object to miracles here and there exclusively when there was apparently no

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need for them: for the especial miracles of Christianity, for instance, there could have been none. There is nothing in the whole scheme of Christ that is not contained in the facts and laws of Nature. It has only gathered to itself the general truths that were believed in from the dawn of being. Not a rag even of its decorations is absolutely new, except it be those particular dogmas which have made it unacceptable by ordinary minds. Why should we go out of our way, then, to believe that this religion was especially announced to the Jews for the salvation of mankind, when the law of salvation is more forcibly inculcated to all of us —to Jew and Gentile, the Englishman and the Hindu—in every page of Nature before us?

Nature demonstrates her own principles, and the demonstration is very clear. It is so clear that we doubt exceedingly if Atheism has ever really existed, except as a whetstone for the sharpening of arguments. We know that some contend even now that there is no God; but when we come to discuss with them we find that they only object to the name, and accept the idea easily enough when we call it Cause, Nature, Mind, Law, or Providence. They admit, in fact, almost all the main conceptions of religion, not excluding Duty, Right and Wrong, and Futurity; and are set down as non-believers merely because they entertain a string of dogmas peculiar to themselves and broadly distinguished from those of Christianity. One great stumbling-block with them, for instance, is: 'Is it He or It?' We for our part see nothing in the difficulty implied in the question except a distinction without a difference; for what is the difference between he, she, or it, when we make use of any of those expressions in speaking of the Infinite Mind? It is hardly right to say of such crotchets that they are atheistic. Of the small minority of thinkers—namely, those who think deepest on the subject—the religion must be self-formed, and therefore tinctured by idiosyncrasies peculiar to each. But these are just the men whose beliefs are the stanchest, as being based on reason and common-sense. Socrates' account of his wisdom was that

he knew only that he knew nothing: Simonides' conclusion was therefore right that man by wisdom knew not God. But surely Socrates knew God as well as any Christian has ever done. What little we do know of God we know only by wisdom or reason, that is, by looking about us. We look about us indeed with different eyes, and Natural Religion comes thus to be diversified in a thousand different ways and by a thousand different influences. The human mind is necessarily an essential factor in the case, and differences in knowledge and wishes cannot but produce varying results in different minds. But the truth intrinsically is the same. Whether we call him He or It, First Cause or Force, it is still the 'Father of all' whom we revere and adore. We cannot afford to give up that idea any more than we can afford to give up the air we breathe, or the water we drink. The man of the woods talks of his God in language which the philosopher admires; and if the philosopher chooses to speak of the same being as 'It' instead of 'He,' he can surely be permitted to do so unblamed, so long as that does not in any way depreciate his estimation of the truth. The epochs of thought are changing generation by generation, and that accounts fully for all little differences of this nature. But in point of fact the actual difference between the belief of the philosopher and of the savage is not really very considerable, and has never been so in any age.

It has been argued by some that the whole system of Natural Religion in its simplicity could never have been reasoned out by man clear of the grossest mistakes and superstitions. But it is sheer nonsense to talk thus when we know very well that there were just as good believers in God before Christianity and Mahomedanism were known, as there have been since. Christianity and all so-called revelations are only digests of the laws which were known, understood, and acted upon in previous ages. Light and knowledge, in whatever manner afforded, are equally from God. Religion is only the process by which we think our-

selves up logically and consecutively into the region of the universal; and there is quite as much of it indicated in the pages of the *Veds* and the *Zendávestá*, of Confucius, Buddha, Socrates, and Plato, as in the *Gospels*, the *Old Testament*, and the *Korán*. In the pages of the former will, in fact, be found *all* that is true, just, pure, and lovely in any of the latter; and, if there be traces of superstition too in some of them, they are only the corruptions of age, such as the Vatican would have foisted into the Gospels if they had existed in manuscript to this day. They are all of them religious codes of equal authority with the Gospels, and, barring their corruptions, worthy of belief where their confirmatory evidence may seem necessary. Reject the superstitions, which are admittedly false, and one is as good as another.

We hold, however, that the evidence of none of these revelations is necessary to understand the ways of God. We stand by *our book*, that book only, and none other; namely, the book of Nature, which demonstrates everything that we want to know of God—to as wide an extent as any revelation has ever attempted it. A grain of sand, a blade of grass, has as many proofs for minds not devoid of reason as all the books we have named can afford. We allow no sanctity to any book whatever; we hold that there can be no sanctity or authority in them. All the religions expounded by them are, we find, mere constructions only, constructions out of the same materials in every case—namely, those culled from the pages of Nature. The historical forms given to them severally are equally unimportant, whether they take the shape of superstitious falsehoods or of pleasing parables and legends. Neither parable nor superstition is religion. One may read better than the other, but they are both mere decorations, to suit different tastes as they have varied in different ages and countries. This, we say, is all the difference between Bráhmanism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Mahomedanism. That Christianity is the religion of the cleverest races of

the earth is only because it is, or seems to be, the best of the compendiums of nature-worship extant. But the underlying current in all the compendiums is the same; and in every case the truth is borrowed truth, borrowed from the pages of Nature, which alone are absolutely true.

This is our vindication of the faith in us, which we shall now attempt to propound.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE FOOT-PRINTS OF THE DEITY.

Is there a God? This is the very first question to answer, and Nature answers it boldly and unhesitatingly, by pointing out a stupendous unity regulated by an intelligent order of development. The unity presumes an architect and a single architect; the order of development an invisible orderer: and no deduction can be more logical. A mathematical proof of the Deity may not be possible, for the simple reason that He cannot be brought before the senses; but we have abundant proofs around us for knowing Him and His ways. Neither one nor the other can be demonstrated, for demonstration is based on sensual evidence, which is not obtainable in this matter either from nature or from local revelations: but they can be proved to conviction by observation, and proofs based on observation and inference are quite as undeniable as those of the senses. We believe daily in a thousand things of which we have, and can have, no demonstrative proof. Must we decline to do so in one particular case only?

God is not to be seen except through His works; but the foot-prints of the Deity in them are strongly marked. We cannot open our eyes in any direction but to read traces of Him. View the world as an astronomer, a geologist, or a botanist; as a zoologist, a metaphysician, or a doctor; as a traveller or a mariner—the mind meditates on nothing that does not place God prominently before it. Not only are art and design perceptible at

every step, but a vigilant and continuous government also; and the question constantly arises: Who is this Designer, this Artist, this Director? Our own faculties are so limited that we get bewildered in thinking of Him; and hence the anxiety to draw a veil as it were between us and the idea by the use of such indefinite expressions as Nature, Providence, Fixed Laws, and Fate. But call Him by what name you please, you cannot deny the existence of a First Intelligent Cause that produces and directs; that keeps everything in order and harmonizes every element of discord around us: and what objection is there to call it God?

God has revealed Himself in all His works, and the revelation is so simple that the poorest intellect cannot miss it. The heavens with their sun, moon, and stars; the earth with its trees, plants, birds, and animals; our own bodies and minds, are all replete with lessons of art, order, and wisdom which are intelligible to everybody: and observation, knowledge, and science only confirm these simple readings. , First read the universe with the naked eye—the never-ceasing order, beauty, and regularity in the heavens; the infinity of objects, animate and inanimate, on the earth; the proportion, harmony, and mutual dependence of the several parts in both to each other—and the conviction is irresistible that an ever-present Mind, distinct from the system it has planned and finished, works it and pervades it, as its essence or life; and all that science has discovered up to the present day only goes to confirm and intensify this belief. Design, purpose, relation of parts to a whole, of means to an end, these are all the discoveries made by science from day to day; and they only come in as tributary witnesses of the truth which was already known, that there is a Designer and Contriver, a Protector or Governor, who directs everything and rules over all.

Is the Universe without God? The regions of immensity are above and around us—not vacant, but choke-full of immense orbs, compared to which our earth is as a grain

of sand. In the solar system there are some sixty planets and their satellites; and our sun is only one of the many shining lights that glisten above us. Even viewed by the naked eye we see a multitude of stars quite distinct from those that move round the sun. With the aid of glasses science has already counted more than twenty millions of them, but from sheer weakness is unable to count more. The milky way is a pathway crowded by them; the nebulous clusters are so distant that the light from them reaches us in millions of years. Does this convey to us any idea of the magnitude of the universe? The nearest fixed star (*a* Centauri) is estimated to be about twenty millions of miles distant from us. Have we the power after this to conceive what immensity is? And yet all these revelations have reference to one firmament only. Science imagines the existence of innumerable other firmaments from which light does not reach us, and which are therefore not visible to us. How vast then is the universe which science has not explored? No human power or invention is capable of representing any correct idea of it. Science represents our conceptions by figures, but figures have limits. How can science then represent what has none? Science is ignorant; and we want wisdom, wisdom to grasp that idea the fulness of which we can scarcely even imagine. The story of St. Augustine and the boy is well known. The monk was pacing the sea-shore meditating on God, when he saw a little boy pouring sea-water out of a cockle-shell into a hole in the sand. 'What are you doing?' asked he of the child. 'O, I am trying to empty the ocean into this hole.' 'But that is not possible, boy; you are wasting your time unprofitably.' 'And so are you, sir,' said the boy, 'in endeavouring to compass the Infinite within the limits of your brain.' This is our great difficulty; we have not room enough in our minds to compass Him: and to the lettered and the unlettered the disadvantage is the same.

The general character of the solar system is now

familiar to the common intelligence; but has our familiarity with it made it less astounding? In these days of Armstrong and Whitworth projectiles we are accustomed to startling velocities; but do they approach the velocity of the heavenly bodies? Jupiter, which is 1400 times larger than the earth, moves round the sun with a velocity of 29,000 miles an hour, the earth with a velocity of 68,000 miles, Mercury with a velocity of 107,000 miles, the comets inconceivably faster—some at the rate of 900,000 miles an hour. Can the mind grasp the ideas thus called forth? And yet what does science reveal but that, notwithstanding their vastness and their velocity, the heavenly orbs move through space without the slightest confusion and disorder. There is no jostling against each other, no collision. Can natural causes explain the phenomenon? It is easy to reply that this is the work of gravitation. But what is gravitation? Is it a thing by itself, or a name by which we generalize the phenomenon we see before us? Man codifies the acts of God into laws, and then thinks those laws to be distinct from Him! By seeing the same objects every day the mind gets accustomed to them, and attributes that to fixed laws which no fixed laws could have originated. Who or what gave birth to gravitation? Are we to regard it as a mere accident called forth into existence by chance, and perpetuated by it? Such a position would only plunge us into yet greater difficulties. Science tells us that our sun and the other suns that we call stars are revolving round a common centre; that the universe is one harmonious whole, without any appearance of disorder or disruption. Has the whole of this bewildering magnitude—every inch of which comprises more design and intelligence than man can fathom, and is regulated by a principle which he cannot explain—has this stupendous conception and this masterly execution of it no contriver but chance? Chance works in a slovenly manner, without order, arrangement, or contrivance. But what do we see in the universe, so far as we can see of it? A whole formed of parts dove-

tailed into each other parts; expressly chosen to form an appointed whole. The universe is in motion, eternally and restlessly. A degree more or less of this motion would put all nature out of joint. Shall we still attribute the origin and general concordance of the whole to chance? Then that Chance, so powerful, so intelligent, and so methodical, is God!

We speak of the universe as though our minds could embrace it. But no one can conceive it but the Infinite. Let us come back then to a more limited field of inquiry—to our own home, the earth, of which we ought to know more. Here also, even the unscientific eye observes the same clear marks of design and wisdom, the same coherent dependence of parts, the same constantly subsisting relation between them in forming a whole, the same action and reaction between means and ends; and science confirms fully and completely the conviction of the unlettered mind. We read the earth now with the aid of geology, chemistry, botany, etc. Geology tells us that the earth has been formed by disruptive agencies and atmospheric, aqueous, and organic influences into the appropriate abode for man it now is. This is absolutely telling us nothing but the way in which the creative and designing mind has moulded the agencies to such magnificent results. The evidence of chemistry and botany is precisely similar. They only explain the *modus operandi* whereby the earth fulfils the object to-day which she has done for ages, to suit the changing necessities of the hour. What does chemistry teach more forcibly than this, that the foulest refuse thrown out by man furnishes vegetation, plants, fruits, and flowers for his convenience and happiness? But who does it? Science only explains how it is done. Man discovers; but what? He discovers only what God has created. Man invents; but what? His invention only takes advantage of Nature's laws and provisions. What is the steam-engine and the electric telegraph—the noblest proofs of his greatness—but applications of God's laws and gifts? He calls himself clever when he is able

to use the means made available to him. But whence come those means?

The earth deserves attention if only for the beauty it displays and the instruction it affords. The proofs of an intelligent First Cause are abundant in it, for everything we come across exhibits a design. There is no place for chance anywhere, or in anything whatever. If geology is to be trusted, not six thousand but perhaps sixty thousand years were necessary to create the rocks, hills, and mountains of the earth. Before those ages and ages there were other worlds, the worlds of vegetables and coals, which are separated from the present surface of the earth by layers of sand and clay; and these again were preceded by anterior worlds, before the worlds of vegetables and coals were made. Here we have the clearest proof of design and progression; none whatever of accident or chance. The ruggedness of the earth's surface, the existence of volcanic mountains, the disruption of strata, were all designed, for they all answer the purposes of a wise government and contribute to the production and renewal of the soil. Here is the very perfection of intelligence to conceive, the very pefection of wisdom to adopt, the very perfection of power to execute; and the same lesson is constantly repeated in everything else around us.

It is the same lesson we read both in the vegetable and the animal world; nay, in every variety of animals, birds, insects, and plants. Each presents a study in itself, and the mere mechanism of each affords abundant proofs of perfection of design; a design which we can barely appreciate, but to which we cannot give effect ourselves, nor know of any power besides Omnipotence that can give effect to it. The animal machinery for instance is, we see, a most ingenious and intricate one, of which the directing power is mysterious, imparted mysteriously, and taken away mysteriously. The directing power is given before the machinery is thoroughly organized; it is taken away when the machinery is still nearly perfect. Man has not been able to restore it to the dead machinery; but

God gives it to the machinery while it is inchoate. Take the machinery into parts and examine it more carefully. Observe only the construction of the human eye; how infinitely nicer it is than the most finished telescope or camera-obscura: and shall we say that the latter have designers and creators, the former none? Observe the bones, the tendons, the veins, the arteries, the nerves, and the muscles of the human frame, and you find more art and better adjustment of proportions in them than in St. Peter's dome or the Táj Mehál; more minutely beautiful mechanism than the best mortal artist can conceive: and shall we say that they have no architect because we cannot find Him? Observe a bird's feather—the very commonest will answer our purpose as well as the rarest; see how it is formed by the putting together of distinct parts, atoms, and fibres, all of which together make up the beautiful whole. Is there no designer of it? Tear the feather into pieces: can you re-assort the fibres or atoms differently and produce the same or an equally good effect as before? One cannot well imagine a more insignificant thing than a gnat, and yet its anatomy examined through the microscope displays marvels as great as the planetary system. The smallest leaf, the smallest fibre of a leaf, contains within itself all the functions of composition and decomposition under the principle of life; each part of it exhibits proportion, order, and skill, and is precisely what it ought to be to answer the end held in view in its formation. A blade of grass shows as much skill and finish as the sun. Its fibres, its cells, its air-valves, its spiral tubes: can any chance produce them? A grain of sand is composed of thousands of silicious shells: how many of them then are comprised in the mountains of the earth? A drop of water has millions of lives in it: how many of them then are contained in the vast ocean? Can any man reason himself to the conclusion that all these innumerable wonders have been formed, exist, and are sustained without having any author or director?

We have not advanced a single evidence here which was

not known before. The page of Nature is the same to-day as it was six thousand years ago, and there is absolutely no new evidence to adduce. But science is explaining day by day the mysteries of the evidences known to us, and that enables us the better to appreciate the greatness and beauty of the design about and around us. Every new discovery of science removes further and further the faintest possibility of chance having ever had any hand in the matter. The necessity of a Creator and Designer is enforced more and more strongly at every forward step that is taken. Of many parts of the arrangement the causes are yet unknown to us; but our ignorance furnishes us with no argument against intention and design. Science is explaining away these difficulties steadily; we see intention and design wherever the veil is lifted, however little the opening may be. We see one law or general principle everywhere, while departing from it there are details under specific variations. The conception or plan is one; its execution is in parts, but all conforming to the one design. The resources available to the Artist, we see, are unlimitable; and the manner in which He utilizes them is, so far as we can understand it, perfect. We do not admit this in words merely, but in practice also. The efforts of human ingenuity have been confined to imitating the invention, ingenuity, and design we see around us. Notwithstanding that all our efforts are confined to mere imitation, we are crossed at every step by difficulties which we cannot always easily get over; but in the design we imitate, there are no difficulties at all.

We search for the Artist, but do not find Him. The telescope does not discover Him, though it brings nigh to us the star, the light from which takes millions of years to reach the earth; the microscope does not reveal Him, though it enables us to detect the existence of animal life in stones; the science of the chemist, which separates oxygen, hydrogen, and carbon from each other, does not separate Him from His works. Why is it so? or is it so really? The anatomist with scalpel in hand examines the

human body, looking through the bones, brains, and blood, but sees no soul. Is there no soul in us? Let each man answer the question for himself, and then say if there is no God in the creation before him. Alas, we have no means, no knowledge for detecting the soul! But the very thought of the Deity is a proof of His existence. It is the testimony of that soul in us which the anatomist will never discover, that the universal frame has a mightier soul. We do not mean that God is nature and nature God, any more than we mean that the human soul and the human body are one. For the whole series of causes and effects around us, we claim a First Cause; for all the various operations and forces which we are able to detect, we want an Operator; for the entire chain of agencies and affinities which science has established we seek, not their Creator only, but their Preserver and Governor also, for we see them constantly reconstituted and modified. Newton's conclusion is therefore inevitable, that this beautiful system could have had its origin in no other way than by the purpose and command of an intelligent and powerful being who governs it. To ask about the whence and how of that being is an inquiry foreign to man, and does not really arise. We call Him First Cause, Soul, and Governor, and hold that the same necessity that proves His existence, proves Him to be eternal and immutable. All things, causes, effects, ends, designs, uses, and laws confirm this conclusion at every point. What revelation other than that in the pages of Nature could establish this more forcibly?

## CHAPTER III.

### THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE DEITY.

THE existence of God established, we have next to determine if He has any attributes, and, if so, what they are. Our idea of God is wholly derived from two sources, namely, (1) from the outward manifestations of Him, and (2) from the inward teachings of conscience; and we hold that the first, or the outward manifestations, prove all His attributes, both physical and moral—the proofs of His moral nature being yet further confirmed by the second. The attributes usually conceded to Him are: Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Omniscience, and the perfection of Wisdom, Goodness, Love, and Purity; and we are quite prepared to prove these by the very evidences which substantiate His existence. Contrivance implies a contriver—contriver, adequate to the results attained in each case. Where the results prove greatness, the contriver must be great; where the results prove wisdom, the contriver must be wise; where the results prove beneficence, the contriver must be good. The existence of this Contriver from eternity is established by the very nature of the contrivance before us; His intelligence by the intelligence displayed in it; His goodness and justice because of such things being known to us. The real nature of God cannot but be incomprehensible to man; the finite intelligence can never transcend its own nature to comprehend the infinite; our knowledge of the infinite is merely negative, resulting from the addition of an indefinite number of finites. But

the addition being indefinite, the idea attained is as positive and certain as human reason can ever expect to make it; and it is clear enough that the assistance of no merely local revelation can in any way better it. We see parts only of God's works; it is parts only that we can conceive; and when we speak of the whole universe, we only mean the sum-total of as many parts as it is possible for us to conjoin. Our conception of the Master of the Universe must necessarily be similar; our thoughts are not sufficiently expansive to allow of the full conception of His attributes: but the limit of the idea is that only of our faculties.

The vastness of the universe, and the skill and power by which it is sustained, baffle human thought to compass it. Of power, therefore, there are abundant proofs. But humanity has no correct idea of Omnipotence; we cannot conceive it, and therefore can never prove it. What we can prove is this only: that He who has ordered the universe, He who is directing and controlling it, can, as a matter of course, do anything except what is contradictory to His own design, that is, what He can never wish to do. If He had worked with His own hands, this would have been clearly manifest; but, as He does not do so, we attempt to limit His potency by speaking of 'general laws' and 'laws of nature' as having created, or as directing, the government of the universe. But this does not circumscribe His power: for if anything can be clear it is this, that the laws act only as His agents; that the Maker of the laws is not subject to them. In point of fact, we know very well that the departures from fixed laws are very frequent. Uniformity, order, and precision mark the general rule; but still are there constant departures from them, as if to prove the arbitrary and intelligent will that really directs and governs. Fitness and correspondences surround us; but even the fitness and correspondences are infinitely varied, and are so full of especial ends and adaptations as to leave no doubt of the untrammelled authority of the First Cause. Both the laws themselves and the

departures from them are, therefore, our proofs of an over-ruling Omnipotence. What are the laws of Nature by which the orbs of heaven are sustained? First, the projectile force that hurled them into space, and next, the force of gravitation that keeps them steady. You cannot call either, or both of them together, God, for you see that they were created to answer a particular end. What then are they but proofs of the power that summoned them into existence to give effect to His design? So far as we can understand then, there can be no limitation to the power of the Designer. He may not be able to make three one, or one three; He may not be able to equalize the properties of circles and squares; He can most assuredly do nothing that is not just, good, and wise: but these are the only limitations that limit Him, and they are limitations fixed by His own nature. To say that God cannot do these things does not qualify His Omnipotence in the least. It only imposes a moral duty on Him: and as the ideas of right and wrong emanate from Him, we see no objection to say that He is subject to such duty.

The Omnipresence of God is proved in precisely the same manner as His Omnipotence. Wherever we see creation, there the Creator must be present; He who arranged all the parts of the universe must have been present at all places at one and the same time to arrange them; He who communicates life everywhere, and directs every change that is going on around and about us at every instant of time, must be present now as before at every place. This is not mere supposition, but the evidence alike of lettered and unlettered intelligence. Science asserts that the planetary system must have been created or arranged, and put into motion at once, because a permanently-balanced system of bodies and motions does not admit of being so balanced except from the commencement. He who balanced them must necessarily have been omnipresent from the outset. But it is not for once only that this omnipresence was required. Science tells us again that every part of the universe is changing, expand-

ing, or being modified day by day; that such change is a necessity, as its effect is restoration; and that this renovation is perpetual. This, to some extent, comes within the cognizance of all of us, book-learned or otherwise. We often see clearly, within the range of our respective observations, that a constant formation, creation, and reproduction is taking place in different parts of the universe, and that each part of it is working itself out apparently in ignorance of what its neighbour is doing, without the general design being ever confounded or frustrated. The proof is irresistible that the general Designer and Director of all is present, at each moment of time, at each distinct part of His works, to give effect to the renovations required, developing what requires to be developed, and winding up what requires to be terminated. This is Omnipresence; and not only God Himself, but even certain of His agents may be held to possess the quality, so far as human conception of the subject extends, as, for instance, gravitation, which is supposed to hold together the universal system.

In the same manner, the Creator and Renovator of the different structures and forces in the Universe must be conversant of everything relating to those structures and forces. His design is in itself, in fact, the best proof of this knowledge. He designed because He knew; He could not have designed if He had not known. We have only now learnt to calculate the speed of light, the cause of planetary motion, the course of the comet; but the Being that designed them must have known them from the commencement of His design. Till very recently our impression was that the earth was stationary, that the sun moved from east to west, that the moon was nearly equal to the sun in size, that the stars were bits of fire stuck up in the heavens to lighten the earth. Our knowledge therefore is merely nominal; we know this only, that we know nothing. We do not even now understand fully the design for the propagation of plants, trees, insects, birds, and animals; but we see that they are all produced and propagated with an exactness of detail that we attribute to the laws of

nature. Among the animals are those which prey on others and those which are preyed upon; but the design is perfect in its measures for preventing the extinction of the one, and the undue multiplication of the other. These are positive proofs of the constant knowledge of the Designer throughout the limits of His design, and as this design extends everywhere, so His knowledge must be unbounded. He perceives everything and provides for every contingency; an universal perception is only another name for universal knowledge, at least so far as physical nature is concerned. The same argument holds equally well as regards moral nature also. All moral powers and affections are from God; He is the chief as well of intellectual and moral as of physical existences, and therefore must be absolutely all-knowing. As regards the past this is only a question of memory; He created and would know, and, as there is nothing before us to impugn His perfectness, the inference is that He must continue to know. The Omniscience of the future seems more difficult to establish, but really is not so; for, seeing that the whole design is His, the conclusion is inevitable that He knows His own design fully. In morals there is this further difficulty involved, that the fore-knowledge of God conflicts with the free-will of man. But, if God knows His whole design with its results, He must know the moral future also, as all events—physical and moral—exist in Him. An intelligent God must know all; the very first principle of existence is intelligence, and the author of it must be all-knowing. But God's foreknowledge does not necessarily influence man's choice. He who created the mind will know of course as much of it as of the body, and of both equally well for ever; but He only *knows*. He knows what will happen just as He knows what has happened; but His knowledge does not necessarily direct or control our actions.

The contrivances of the Deity are vast and various. The inanimate earth, the animated world, the planetary system with all its contents, form together an enormous whole, the bare conception of which staggers the human mind. But

is it its vastness only that strikes us so forcibly? What does astronomy, mathematics, geology, botany—all the sciences, in fact—assert but that throughout the boundless universe wisdom and intelligence are as manifest as regularity and power? The study of the physical and moral causes demonstrates with equal force that they are both alike dependent on wise, regular, and salutary laws. Order universally proves wisdom, and the works of nature are everywhere orderly and well-regulated. We are averse to refer again and again to the heavenly orbs, of which we know so little; but we know enough of them now to appreciate the wisdom of the arrangements and rules by which they are governed. The solid and insensible earth, we see, is alive with motion, teeming with life. It was not created complete, is not complete yet, will perhaps never be complete. It is always changing, something or other is being always created. With what wisdom are these changes effected, with what facility are all difficulties in their way overcome and the perfection of results attained! Take up anything of the earth, from a spire of grass to the bulkiest animal frame, and the lesson is the same. The structure of the human body is the one that has been most carefully examined, and what is the result? The machine is so perfect that no improvement of it can be suggested, no defect of it rectified. The brain is an inexplicable mystery: it is a soft, spongy substance composed of tender threads interwoven. This is our seat of wisdom; no encyclopædia holds a larger assemblage of images and characters. Is not He who spun the threads wise? When they are deranged to any considerable extent can man restore them to order again? But beautiful as the mechanism of the brain is, what is it to the soul, the nature of which is a mystery to us? The soul is to the body what light is to the material world; and is not the Giver of it wise? It is a mystery which we cannot solve; but the intent of it is too obvious to be misread. Who is there that does not appreciate the surpassing wisdom of the design?

The tokens of the divine *character* in the external world are: (1) the predominance of goodness over hurtfulness, (2) the predominance of happiness over misery, (3) the predominance of virtue over vice. The first is established by the profuse bounty with which the wants of all living things are supplied, which is too evident to be doubted. We cannot here refer to all the instances we see of it, but shall notice one only which will be understood by the humblest intellect. Water, we see, is a necessity to all of us, in all places; and how beautifully and profusely it is supplied! The air robs it from the ocean, and sends it on in clouds to the earth, to fall down in rains, or gather round the mountains in mists and vapours, which then melt themselves into rills. The quantity wanted for immediate distribution is thus measured out in drops, while the remainder is left on the declivity of the mountains to be distributed by rivers. But are not the clouds capricious? A single effect, a partial dearth in one place or a partial abundance in another, may be so characterized; but the general effects are always beneficial. They come when they are wanted, and where they are wanted; the relief afforded being generally sufficient. There are places where it does not rain; but there the rivers overflow their banks, or the night-dews are so abundant that they saturate the ground. In this does not goodness predominate over hurtfulness? What is the extent of country that suffers, say, in the course of a twelvemonth, from dearth of water; what the area so flooded that all vegetation on it is destroyed, as compared with the extent that blesses the equable dispensation of Providence?

Happiness predominates over misery, and that is a proof of God's love. The fact is best exhibited among the inferior creatures of the world. The insect riots through the short interval it lives; the birds sing among the branches and make love to each other; the fish sport in the great wide sea. Nor is man less susceptible of blessedness than they: in fact, he seems to be more susceptible of it, seeing that he can be blessed both physically and through the mind;

and the efforts to make him happy are incessant. What has geology discovered but that all the changes which the earth has undergone have been for its improvement, to render it more fit for the habitation of man? Day and night come to him at their appointed hours to remind him alternately of labour and rest; and both labour and rest are but variations of blessedness as absolutely wanted as pleasure itself. The normal action of the senses is in fact nothing but enjoyment; it is only when they are over-indulged that they cloy. On the positive side, therefore, there is nothing but happiness: the constitution of animal life is enjoyment; pleasure is the normal expression of sensation, pain its liability only. The intention of the Creator, therefore, throughout His design is benevolent. The existence of pain and evil in the world will be separately accounted for; it is sufficient for our purpose here to note that that is no qualification of the love of God.

Creation is the manifestation of God's love; but not of His love only, but also of His purity. Is this assertion startling? It would be so if the common dogma were true that there is nothing in life but vice, that virtue does not exist but in name. We assert, on the contrary, that a large amount of virtue, in germs at least, exists in the world; that the normal character of the soul is virtuous, though it is of course liable to vice. Where is the mind so utterly hardened that does not *wish* to be holy, that does not *strive* to be holy, that ever gives up the struggle for improvement hopelessly? 'Not yet' is indeed our frequent reply to calls for final purification; we wish to defer the task slothfully: but no one, not even the worst reprobate, says—'Never.' This, we hold, to be a proof of God's holiness.

But the best proofs of God's character are the *internal* proofs. He who has given the sense of goodness to us, can He be wanting in goodness Himself? He who has made us loving and kind, can He be wanting in love? He who has given us conscience, can He be aught but pure?

From the attributes we have conceded to Him, we gather that God is all-perfect; and this impression is confirmed by all we see around us. The moral perfections of God are reciprocally connected. If you allow one, you concede all. Power first existed; further expansion must be taken as a proof of wisdom; further still, of goodness, justice, and mercy. They are only the gradual and successive developments of an eternal principle. We have reasoned ourselves to this admission in the first instance, and then confirmed the evidence of reason by the inborn promptings of the mind. The latter evidence is perhaps the best, and there is no doubt that the soul in us, which we do not understand, assures us unmistakably that the soul of the universe is all-perfect. The savage paints God in brighter colours than he appropriates to himself; and as we advance in civilisation we change the ideal according to our development. We cannot conceive perfection; neither nature nor revelation has enabled us to do so. Revelation only repeats the words that nature puts into our mouths. But the demonstration is as conclusive as any moral demonstration can be that the fountain and root of all being, the fountain and root of all wisdom, the fountain and root of all goodness and love, must be all-perfect; since the very existence of such a being establishes His completeness in all respects.

## CHAPTER IV.

### HUMAN LIFE.

WHAT is life? Do we know anything about it? If so, in what way?

The universe is instinct with life. The earth, the water, and the air are full of animated beings—both those we see with the naked eye, and those which the microscope reveals to us; and it may be that not only the other planets and suns are so filled, but also the immensity that intervenes between them. This, if so now, most probably has been so from the commencement. What vast numbers of beings then have lived and died! And yet has not the mystery of life been even passably explained. We know not how it is imparted to us, nor how it is recalled. No revelation has thrown any light on the subject, nor science penetrated the gloom that surrounds it. It is easy to say that life is the result of organization, and death the result of disorganization. Such explanations are unmeaning and enigmatical. They do not elucidate the why and wherefore, the whence and whither, of existence. What we want particularly to know is the purpose of life: it cannot be that it has none.

This is an inquiry in which our sole guides are reason, the feelings, and conscience. We do not know what conscience is, any more than we know what life is: but we feel that we have such a thing in us—an innate sense of good and evil which does not mislead us. We also feel that we have a power in us that enables us to distinguish

right from wrong, truth from falsehood; and this we call reason, which also is a steady guide. And these two, with the feelings of the mind, which are spontaneous, help us greatly to understand what we are in the world for, and to what end we are bound. No book-revelations—which are trustworthy so far only as they are reasonable—assist us in our inquiry to the same extent.

Who is the lord of this earth? Man apparently; for everything seems to have been given for his use, advantage, and enjoyment: and yet he feels that he sits with the sword of Damocles suspended over him. The beasts and birds are differently constituted, and appreciate fully the paradise given to them. Their wants are confined to physical food and physical pleasures, and these having been abundantly given are handsomely enjoyed. Their two most powerful instincts are hunger and lust, both of which are amply gratified. Who has ever seen an unhappy beast, bird, or insect, except under exceptional circumstances? Their position, unlike ours, seems to be one purely of comfort and pleasure. They have no morality or immorality to think of, no doubt or remorse to trouble them. If there be sufferings even among them for which we see no recompense—and doubtless thraldom to man is one of them—that is probably the condition of their existence, their discipline—leading to some good not otherwise attainable. What we see plainly is that their general state on earth, unlike that of man, is one of happiness.

But why cannot man enjoy his position similarly? The natural world is surely as beautiful to him as to other animals. Sleep after labour is full of sweetness to him; food to the hungry full of enjoyment; soft odours, the warbling of birds, the moonlight, and the breeze of summer, exhilarating to all. Pleasure comes to man through all the senses—the eyes, the ears, the nose, the imagination; on land and water; from every direction above and around him. The savage has his wants supplied, and they are few. The civilised man has also his wants supplied, or at least many of them. For his personal convenience are given

lands and livings, houses and gardens, silver and gold, meat and drink—sometimes in abundance, never very stintedly. But man feels that enjoyment is not the prime object of his existence; the sword hanging over him makes it impossible that it should be so. With all the good given to him he has less of enjoyment than the other animals; more of discomforts also; and, if we imagine that he has been made for either one or the other, his life appears but a chaos of contradictions.

The position of man being so singular, we naturally conclude that his destiny must be different from that of the other animals. He stands in relief as it were to the rest of them. He alone can judge between right and wrong; he alone has ideas of moral good and moral evil; he alone has aspirations which the control of electricity and steam does not satisfy. He has mind besides instinct, —a mind made for progression. The beasts progress from birth to adult years, but not from generation to generation. The horse of to-day is the same as the horse that lived a thousand years ago; but the school-boy of to-day walks burdened with the discoveries of Copernicus and Newton, with the studies of Socrates and Bacon. He has been progressing from age to age; but whereto? The blessings of life are given to some of us—namely, good health, a cheerful disposition, and a mind at peace. Its evils are felt by many more—namely, pains and diseases, discontent of mind, and miseries arising from losses, crimes, and contentions. But neither one nor the other detains us in the race. We are hurried through our felicities when we would rather linger over them, and dragged through our trials when we would fain avoid being exposed to them. On! on! We try in vain to stay the speed of the fleeting hours; all our efforts are futile to break the strength of the current that whirls us forward. We are now surrounded by friends and relatives, anon left behind and solitary, then altogether deserted. What then is the purpose of this life? Whither are we bound?

The reading of the enigma by reason and conscience is

that 'Life is a school'—a school for moral and spiritual training, every event in which is a lesson for our purification, all the elements around us our teachers. We see about us nothing but a collection of inexorable elements and powers, all of which however have certain duties to perform to further our advancement. Riches and poverty, gaiety and sorrows, marriages and deaths, the ties of life bound or broken, are all lessons, not thrown out at random to us, but designed and appointed for our benefit and salvation. As a rule, we all value riches, greatness, and power; though intrinsically they can have no value whatever, being akin, at best, to the thirst of fever which the supply of water does not quench. They are of value only if they teach us humility, and make us useful members of society. As a rule, we are afraid of poverty, distempers, and afflictions; but in truth they are more valuable than wealth and greatness, as restraining and subduing our passions, teaching us lessons of gentleness and patience, and training us for the most difficult problems of existence. Have you been prosperous in life, my millionaire friend? What have you learnt from your prosperity? If pride and self-sufficiency only, your schooling has not terminated: if moderation, temperance, and generosity, you have learnt well. Have you been miserable in life, poor man? What have you learnt from misery? If envy and hardness of heart only, the lesson has been to no purpose: if fortitude, trust in God, and self-reliance, you have learnt well. The greatest of lessons to acquire seem to be two only—namely, to suffer bravely, and to wear humbly. The one we derive from our afflictions, the other from prosperity. If we fail to learn these, then is human life vain to us; our trial still further deferred.

Life then, we understand, simply as the trial of the mind; and it is the mind, we see, which gives its character to it. To the sorrowing man it seems gloomy, to the satiated man effete and tasteless, to the cheerful man cheerful, to the hopeful man hopeful, to the pure-minded man pure, to the joyful joyous, to the good good. It is

the same creation upon which the eyes of all are fixed; but the aspect it bears to them severally is different. The eye makes the beauty it looks upon, the ear its own melody, the heart what confers beauty and gladness to it. There are no blessings which the mind may not convert into the bitterest evils, no trials which it may not transform into the greatest blessings. Our trials are constant; their purpose one. If we benefit by them then is not life vain. The blight, the void, the blank in it, that we complain of, is all in ourselves. If we kindle the life in us and do our duty manfully, the darkest phase of life will not be utterly dark to us.

Man's position in life is work. All the other animals find their need provided for them, and have only to seek for the replenishment of their wants. Man alone must labour to get them satisfied. A nature with higher ends than indolent repose and irresponsible indulgence has been given to him, and work is its proper element: work, not simply to supply his natural but also his moral wants, so that he might acquire the virtues with which his welfare is wound up. Every now and then, every petty incident of life calls for an act of self-command, while every second event perhaps calls for the exercise of calmness, or candour, or modesty, or self-respect, or generosity. The mind must be well-trained to meet these calls as they arise, however sudden may be the emergency. In our humanity there is a problem, the speculative solution of which is philosophy, its practical solution a good life. 'Forward' is the watchword of existence, and growth of goodness and piety the end to be attained. God has given natural piety to all, just as he has given natural reason to all—possibly in greater or less degree. Man's business is the culture of the portion he has received. The seed is in us; the field is in our hearts: on whom does it rest to cultivate it but ourselves?

Amusements and pleasures men seek for naturally in the world; and there is no reason why they should not. God has not given us a wish too much, or a passion too many;

and it does seem that He intended that we should enjoy them, enjoy them well and thoroughly, provided the enjoyment be such as can be indulged in with windows open. But reason demands that the senses be not perpetually clamorous. Besides the gratification of our appetites there are apparently other and more important duties devolving on us. There is the mind to cultivate, the soul to train, the heart to purify; and these duties must not be lost sight of in the round of our pleasures, or even of our worldly avocations. Secular work is in most cases a necessity: God has not made us independent of it, and therefore we must work. But the beauty of God's contrivance is this, that the daily labour apportioned to us can always be blended with the higher objects of our existence, with the final end of our being. In the shop, the school, the office, in our own houses, in the midst of our enjoyments and pleasures, we have the same opportunities, the same advantages and disadvantages, the same temptations to work with, for improving our minds and purifying our nature as elsewhere, and there is no excuse therefore, for losing sight of the end while we are busy with the means.

Man works; he amasses fortunes, or writes books, or sews cloths, or makes shoes: the work is all alike. But the work does not go with him when he departs from the world: what goes with him is the impress of the work on his mind. Riches, power, fame, enrich not the mind if they do not give it the development it requires. Our one great need is expansion—more, and yet more, day by day. 'Give me riches, fame, and power,' say we. 'But, no,' says an overruling Providence; 'you will not profit by them. Take what you call the evils of life; they will sanctify, expand, and invigorate all that is estimable in you.' Gold and silver, like everything else, are but means to an end. The carpenter is not richer for his tools, nor the rich man for his money-bags. What proportion of men, real men of worth, have the rich turned out? The true aristocrats of nature are not those who have silver and gold, but, physically, those who are healthy and strong, and, mentally,

those who are wise and virtuous. All that we need seek for, therefore, is that which will best work out our destination. The guides are in us: we have intelligence to judge of intellectual things, conscience to judge of moral things, affections to judge of domestic relations and everything affectional, the soul for approaching nearer to God. What is wanted of us is action, the performance of our duties in our respective spheres without running counter to a provident God bent on achieving our salvation.

What do the tattered rags of the beggar hide? A human heart. And what the royal mantle of a prince? A human heart only. The trials of both are absolutely the same. Good health to both is the effect of temperance, sobriety, and virtue; a cheerful and contented mind the effect of goodness, kindness, and love; peace, the attendant of charity and general good-will. To both the evils of life are pains and diseases brought on by excesses and debaucheries; discontent of mind caused by envy, pride, impatience, or misdirected ambition; misery born of ill-nature, anger, malice, or strife. The scheme of Providence is to make both happy here and hereafter; and, in the case of both, duty and happiness have been so interwoven that they cannot be true to the one without reaping the other.

A good life carries with it its own reward; the mind has no happiness except through its intrinsic excellence. It is true that, like all animals, man also derives genial satisfaction in appeasing his hunger and thirst; and that, unlike the other animals, the pleasure is greater to him when he can tickle his palate with dainty morsels and exquisite drink. But enjoyments of this sort are not filling, and cannot therefore be prized very highly. Sensual gratifications, the brutes enjoy in greater degree than man; wealth, the dog watches more vigilantly in his heap of bones; cunning, the fox displays it in higher degree. Delights and pleasures of this kind are delights and pleasures only to those who have not been able to awaken their reason and conscience, and cannot last long. Pains, rottenness, and disease are the effects of lust and intemperance; poverty and in-

solvency the consequence of pride, prodigality, and recklessness. The pleasures of the mind, on the contrary, grow and improve: parental, conjugal, and filial love increase in ardency by age; justice, friendship, and humanity never cloy in their development; purity of conscience is an unfailing source of felicity, and the best lifter-up of the head to all.

What disturbs our equanimity most in life are the apparent inequalities of the human lot; though in reality the inequalities are not so great as we fancy them to be. It is almost impossible for us correctly to find out who are the really happy, who the really miserable; who the really good, and who the really wicked. How then can we determine if our positions in life are really unequal or not? In point of fact, things are more impartially balanced than they appear; absolute inequality is an exceptional case. As a rule, life is a system of checks and balances: no blessing comes without a drawback to it; no calamity without a corresponding compensation. The great and most frequent mistake is that which appraises the highest as the happiest state. An inversion of reasoning would be more accurate: the happiest state, whichever it be, ought to be prized as the highest; and often a state of comparative poverty is found to be far happier than a state of comparative affluence. In reality, our wants are not many. We suffer more from our desires than our actual necessities. But all our desires are not wholesome; and very often our failures, which we count as disadvantages, are really of advantage to us, as leading to greater contentment and felicity.

'He that needs least,' says Socrates, 'is most like the gods who need nothing.' Do we understand this? 'I was happy,' you will hear many admit; 'I hope to be happy,' is the aspiration of many more: but 'I am happy,' is the admission of none. Why is it so? Simply, because we would fain have more than we actually stand in need of. It is man that makes his life unhappy; unhappy by its nature it is not. If the most miserable man will draw up

an inventory of his blessings, and then an inventory of his wants, he will find that he has more of the former than of the latter. If we only knew how little others enjoy their seeming advantages, which make us so envious, there would be much less of heartburning in the world than there actually is, and much greater content. The servant envies his master; oftener the master has greater cause to envy his servant, at least in respect to particular advantages. Obscurity has, no doubt, its drawbacks; but a great name has often many more, as every famous man has ordinarily many rivals and many enemies. Persons of birth, riches, power, and talents are not necessarily happier than humbler men; there is no real reason to envy them: and, when we do envy them, we only create an anguish where there originally was none. The good in life in our portion we look upon as our due, and receive without acknowledgment. We only fire up when we receive evil, as if it was sent to us and us alone. Those who are able to receive both cheerfully, understand and appreciate human life best.

There has been at all times past, and there probably will be at all times to come, two sorts of men, broadly divided as the good and the bad, the godly and the ungodly. There grow tares in the field as well as wheat, and they grow together up to the harvest—the harvest of death. We do not know if they are parted even after death; it is possible that they are not. But this we know, that none are so bad in life but that they have some good in them, and that, if they only attempt it, and if further time for such attempt be available to them, even the tares may become wheat before they are finally gathered. The capacity of becoming better is inherent in man. 'I am,' 'I ought,' 'I can,' 'I will,' are words which man alone can say, and the saying of which distinguishes him from the lower animals; and, as God must love all His creatures, there can be no doubt that every endeavour man makes to improve himself is sure to be assisted by Him. 'Never despair' ought, therefore, to be our distinguishing motto

in life. Why should the greatest sinner be utterly hopeless?

We frequently hear it said that man is sinful by nature: but, in fact, he is not so. His constitution is apt for virtue; sin is the depravation and abuse of it: nothing makes him miserable but the misuse of his advantages. Even when utterly depraved, man is never antagonistic to virtue. He does not hate justice as justice, truth as truth, benevolence as benevolence. He admires them while he violates them. He fires up when another's iniquity is referred to. God therefore did not frame us wrong. He has only saddled us with an additional responsibility which He has not assigned to other creatures. Man alone of all His creatures on the earth can sin. The tiger slays ruthlessly, the serpent stings treacherously, the wrath of the bear is ungovernable; but they act upon their instincts and sin not. Man acts with reason and conscience to help him, and hence arises his peculiar responsibility. But He that has imposed the responsibility on us must, and does, help us to do justice to it. We have only to gird up our loins and 'screw our courage' for success, however much the odds against us may be. There is darkness against the paths of all of us; difficulties insuperable to our own exertions; anxious and fearful troubles; pains, afflictions, and sorrows: but there is often, very often, at our greatest extremity, a direct intervention of Providence for our relief. Our greatest needs are not seldom met by means we never dream of; and from great crimes we are at times deterred by hindrances we never calculate. This establishes the government of God. He uses general laws where nothing more is required; but, where those laws fail to secure a particular end, He most certainly can and does interfere with them to insure the specific purpose to be attained. The experience of that man must be very little indeed that has not discovered that very often thoughts come into our minds and incidents take place which cannot be purely 'accidental;' and what are these but especial acts of grace?

This life, then, with an ever-wakeful God superintending its working, is not a bad life for us after all. We understand it as the first opportunity given to us for the attainment of excellence; an opportunity variegated by a considerable share of happiness, though touched also with a shade, sometimes a deep shade, of misery. As a rule, childhood is happy, youth is happy, labour, honest labour, is happy, rude health is happy, there is deep satisfaction in manhood, peace in old age. Each of the stages is, indeed, also liable to misery; but misery apparently is not their normal condition. The eye opens on a world of beauty and loveliness; the ear hears tones and voices that fill the heart with rapture; the angel of gladness is all around us. If the angel of affliction be there too, turn not away from him, for without him the whole scheme of love would perhaps be frustrated.

With all its evils life is a blessing to all of us; and the best proof of this is that no one wishes to die. It is not simply the dread of something after death that binds man to life, but an innate love for life itself. Misery makes a greater impression on us than happiness, because misery is not the normal condition of our existence; our happy days pass unnoticed simply because they are so many; we do not give sufficient attention to our blessings, which are constant, but run off to see the occasional ruins and wrecks about us; the times of calamity are the mile-stones by which we count progress, but only because as a rule life is a good and gracious boon. It has good for the good, virtue for the faithful, victory for the valiant; and we *feel* God, not only as the cause of these bounties, but as the dispenser of them. Why do we shudder at death? Because life, we find, is not, with all its trials and misfortunes, altogether unpalatable to us, while of death we know very little indeed for certain. Reason tells us that death can be nothing more than liberation or relief; but that very reason tells us that to live and endure adversity is more heroic than to seek relief in death.

Life is short, and we love it so that we are constantly

complaining of its briefness. But, if Providence has made it short, let it pass away. It is after all but the traveller's passage, and demands no more than his passing thoughts and affections, not his ultimate attachment. Only be it passed in the ways of duty, in the exercise of wisdom and benevolence, with watchfulness: in a word, brief as it is, let it be well spent, so that the direct object of it may not be missed. If it carries us one step forward towards the end, then shall we not have borne its burdens and miseries in vain. It is not possible for God to fail in his intents in any respect; and if we do not find man in this life to be exactly what God wished him to be, it is only because God did not intend this world to be the final theatre for working out His scheme. In the long-run man will and must be exactly what God wished him to be. All he has to do here is not to thwart the consummation of that scheme by pulling against it. An unwilling horse necessarily makes his own journey long.

## CHAPTER V.

### OUR DUTIES.

THE idea of God correctly formed makes it comparatively easy for us to understand the duties expected of us. If God be wise, pure, good, and loving, it is surely not difficult to understand that we should love Him, submit to His dispensations, and obey His dictates with cheerful loyalty. 'But how are you to know His dictates to obey them?' triumphantly asks the Christian or the Vedantist. 'Where do you find any expression of His will except in the *Bible* and the *Upanishads*?' Our reply is as before, that the laws of God are broadly written on every page of nature, and that none but the blind or reprobate can misread them. What do you want to know? What do the *Bible* and the *Veds* teach you that you do not find expressed as forcibly in nature? Are not the Ten Commandments to be seen in every object around us? Did not the good and the pious know of them in the past, and observe them, before either the *Bible* or the *Veds* were generally known? Are they not now understood by the good and the pious in places where Christianity and the other book-religions have not penetrated? If the duties of life were only to be read in the pages of the *Bible*, or the *Korán*, or the *Veds*—if they were only to be learnt in churches, mosques, and *sumájes*—what need was there for reason and conscience being given to us? No; morality is not in this or that system of religion, but it is established in nature and in man. It has only to be called forth and exercised.

As good health is the law of nature and ill-health its perversion, so action according to nature is morality, opposed to it immorality. What is true is that we do not all read nature with the same eye, any more than we all read book-revelations in the same sense. But the page of nature before us is one; and in nature and kind the lessons we derive from it are one; though possibly not one in form in every instance. The variations in form, however, cannot matter much. What God can require of us is simply the performance of our duties as they are made plain to us. Christianity has labelled this truth by asserting that, 'Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required;' and the reverse must necessarily be equally true, that to whomsoever less is given, from him less will be received.

If we accept God then, as the first of our benefactors, as all Nature says He is, the very first of our duties naturally is the love of God; we had almost said to the *exclusion*, but we more advisedly correct ourselves by saying, to the *inclusion* of all other duties. The knowledge of this truth is the same in all minds, at least at the outset, though it may be that it is not well sustained in many. The goodness of God is so manifest that it is more difficult not to understand it than to understand it aright, and where is the savage that does not understand it at all? Amid all the contrivances and resources exhibited in the universe nothing is more marked, more simple to understand, than the unceasing and unfailing supply of food provided for the innumerable myriads of life with which it abounds, though that food has to be supplied in different ways to different kinds of existences. With animal life to eat is to be happy, and everything conduces to the supply of this need—light, heat, mechanism, and the elements. The intent is palpable that no one shall perish from lack of food; for the infinitude of life around us there is an immensity of supply; even in the burning deserts of Arabia the camel finds the acacia to subsist upon. The supply indeed is so great that we are almost startled at the

waste we see around us; though in point of fact we know that there is no waste in creation. Does any parent so lavishly provide for his children? The most beautiful provision for our education is instinct, which not only believes without proof, but against proof. Is there any lack of it in the universe? For man whose life is not bestial, who has other aspirations than mere eating and sensual gratifications, we see a thousand substances and properties created, with an adaptation so exact that it is impossible to misread the intention. If it had been difficult to establish these truths from the pages of nature, it might have been difficult to understand that love and allegiance to God are due from us. But, as the case stands, not to appreciate such obligation seems to be simply impossible.

But what is love of God? How are we to exhibit it? We cannot love God personally, as we love wife and children, father and mother, brother and sister, for He has no personality to love. Is it difficult to understand from the pages of nature and from the teachings of reason and conscience, that the love of God is simply the love of virtue, the love of goodness, and the love of truth; that is, the love of those of His attributes by which we best appreciate Him? If we really love God we can only prove that love for Him by endeavouring to please Him; and in what way can we please Him but by furthering His purposes, by meeting Him half way, as it were, in the accomplishment of His intents? Why is God not seen? Probably because if He were seen He could not test our love. God is a spirit, pure even to purity, having no earthiness about Him. Our love for Him, therefore, if sincere, would necessitate the throwing off of our earthiness that we might the sooner be able to see Him in purity. The love of God necessarily comprehends every other duty that we can think of; all acts, exercises, and discipline of the mind, will, and affection towards Him.

The string of duties usually added to the love of God are: fear of and trust in Him, honour and respect for Him, and

adoration of Him; and reason and conscience explain the sense in which these duties are to be rendered. The fear of God cannot mean trepidation, for He is a loving and not a stern Father to us: it must necessarily mean such a regard for Him as will keep us away from sin, such a feeling for Him as will prevent us from displeasing Him. The trust in Him can similarly mean only such a strong attachment for Him as will enable us to bear with equanimity the inequalities and disappointments of life. We seldom understand why His dispensations are, at least seemingly, unequal: we should try our best to remedy the inequalities if we can; but, failing in that, our next best course is to reconcile ourselves to them, fully believing that the God whom we see to be so kind and good to us in everything will always do what is best for us, even though we may not understand His acts in every instance. So also, honour and respect for, and adoration of God do not mean the deference which a servant shows to his master, or a hireling to the person who hires him, but to read God's ways correctly, obey the dictates of reason and conscience with fidelity, and submit to the castigations inflicted by Him with patience, if not with cheerfulness. We refer to the last particularly as perhaps the greatest of all our virtues: it implies implicit reliance on God at the hour of our greatest tribulation; reliance on wisdom of which the proofs about us are abundant. He knows what He gives and refuses: we do not. We repine to see what we want given to others, but denied to us: we have to reconcile ourselves to the conviction dictated by reason that what suits others may not be equally suitable to us, and that of this God is the best, the only judge.

The love of God therefore implies, as we have said, all the duties collectively which we owe to Him; and, similarly, the second grand division of our duties is comprised in the love of our kind, which embraces all the duties we owe upon the earth. The love of God and the love of man are, in fact, produced by the same temper of mind, the former being the foundation of the latter; and truly does the

*Bible* say that 'on these two hang all the law and the prophets.' Man knows both these duties by intuition. We do not know if other animals have any similar feelings. If they have, they too must have a moral life which may or may not be distinct from ours. Our code is based on conscience, which says distinctly what we should do, and what not. After that reason takes up the problem and works it out, and after that again experience, not the least important teacher of all. The child stumbles and learns to walk, burns his finger and avoids fire; and to men, similarly, sin and pain are but the stumble and the fire which hurt only to teach. The lessons are invariably the same. Who does not know, or being told does not admit, that every virtue resolves itself to one or other of the two grand divisions—the love of God and the love of man?

We have said that the love of God is not a personal love; nor does the love of man bear that character. The love of God is the love of Goodness and Truth; and, similarly, the love of man implies bearing with our neighbours and doing good to them, to such extent as may be practicable for us. An isolated being has no ethical sense, for he does not need it. Morality begins with social life, and is also best tested by it. There are various kinds of men in the world: some are proud, others immoral, others covetous, others unjust. Our inward monitor tells us that our duty to all is the same; we must love all in charity and peace; our benevolence and beneficence must be constant, habitual, and universal. God has made nothing in the world in vain, or to be idle; every part is made to minister to the good of the whole according to the powers and virtues given to it; and, as He Himself is unremitting and incessant in His care and well-doing for us, even so must we try to act to the best of our power towards each other. The love of man is the basis of practical virtue; to spread happiness around us is our happiness; no one can do a good deed without feeling himself the happier for it. In an utilitarian world it is no slur on the economy of nature that the ultimate basis of every praiseworthy act is self-

gain. But the act implies great sacrifices, for it implies patience and long-suffering; mildness, kindness, and beneficence; absence of envy, rashness, and over-hastiness; total negation of vanity and self-pride. No man can make such sacrifices without benefit to himself.

What is religion beyond this: namely, being and doing good, to the best of our power? And for this exercise what theatre can be better than this world, our coarse and common world, with all its cares and temptations, its fights and rivalries, its ever-busy and absorbing avocations? Our virtues are justice, truth, sincerity, self-denial, gentleness, forbearance, and purity. No man can be thoroughly proficient in any of them without the active tussle of life. The book of nature speaks of no such thing as salvation through Christ, or any body else; but it does speak of work, toil, effort, character, gradual development of the mind and feelings, gradual acquisition of the purification that saves. It is the plodding workman, the bustling man in office, the active artisan, the wide-awake tradesman, who is called upon to exercise these virtues. The conflict of life is in fact given to man for no other end; a religious life means a life of usefulness in its broadest sense. Take a long breath and a deep breath; do full justice to the body, the senses, and even the passions: but use God's means only to the purposes of God, that is, for your own improvement. Live a brave, manly life; always at work in your calling, but always making true use of the means to the final end. Wealth has its duties and its instructions; poverty teaches labour and self-denial; the fortunate speculation, the disappointed hope, have each their respective teachings. All these divide themselves into the two main parts of negative and positive virtue; negative, to do harm to no one, positive, to do every good in one's power.

By the laws of nature it is the interest of every man to act well. Says conscience to us: 'Be chaste, be temperate, be laborious;' and experience invariably shows that the breach of these instructions is punished by ailments. Says conscience again: 'Be just, true, and merciful;' and

experience teaches us, bitterly indeed, that the departures from these instructions carry their own punishment with them. Even in that which we understand best—namely, the making of money—unjust gains we find are of the nature of leaven; they sour the whole lump, and bring down curses on all the possessions of a man, lawfully or unlawfully acquired; while the little competence acquired in righteousness continues much longer than much greater wealth acquired in unrighteousness. The connection is so perfect, the penalties attached to evil-doing follow so regularly, that no one of any experience can possibly mistake the instruction. Nor are we really so sinful by nature as we are represented to be, that to reject such instructions summarily should be natural to us. Immorality is abhorrent to the standard of natural reason, so long as it has not been perverted by crime or lawlessness; man by nature is only *liable* to vice, not given up to it. At all events, the stereotyped ethics of book-revelations cannot add force to such instructions. The sum-total of our duties, as we read them in nature, is this: What we understand the Deity to be, that must we attempt to be ourselves, though we can only imitate Him at a very respectful distance. Do we find Him just? we must try to be as just as we can; do we find Him pure? we must try to approach His purity as far as flesh and blood will permit; do we find Him good and kind? then must we try to be good and kind ourselves; and, as His virtues are not limited, we must not limit our well-doing. What is morality? It is only that influence of nature which opens the heart to appreciate the concordance of the universe with a feeling that it alone shall not be a discordant atom in it. A longing to be at one with the rest of creation, which is called forth in us by nature, teaches us all our duties fully; and, the duties taught, we have to act up to them. If we fail we lose the first opportunity given to us to win our spurs. We have to *go up* for final salvation; if we choose to *go down*, the ascent, *which must be achieved*, is necessarily deferred and delayed. We believe

however in this assurance, that it is nothing but an opportunity lost; that further opportunities are given to us. However bad we may seemingly be, our conviction is firm that we shall yet, all of us, be helped on to eventual happiness and purity in due course. The gnarled tree gives as valuable timber to the workman as the straight and ungnarled trunk, though doubtless it gives him much greater trouble to shape it. In both cases, however, the tree must be sound, not rotten, to be of use; and in our case too, the purity required for final happiness must be attained.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE INTERMEDIATE FUTURE.

EVERYTHING around us images a spiritual life: the strong man that toils and the child that plays have thoughts beyond their labours and their occupations. The animal enters life ready clothed, provided with natural weapons of defence, and armed with conscious instinct to seek food and sensual enjoyments. This was its condition when the world began; this is its condition now. There has been no progressive knowledge or wisdom for it; and on these premises we conclude—perhaps erroneously—that this world is all to it. But man's position is not similar. He has to depend for sustenance and protection on others at the outset, and then on his own exertions. He gets nothing ready-made for him; and his aspirations are not limited to what he is able to procure. He first lived in caverns, and now lives in houses; is physically weak, and yet more powerful than the tiger and the elephant, more cunning than the fox, more soaring than the eagle; has progressed from invention to invention, and from knowledge to knowledge. But these improvements do not bound his yearnings; the world can give nothing to content him: the world then cannot be his final destination. The beasts of the field seem to be satisfied with their lot; but not man with any, not even the savage.

What is our experience of human life? To some it is labour, business, or activity; to others pleasure, gain, or success; to others again, mere pain, loss, or disappoint-

ment. These last are not the least numerous; they find in life nothing but trouble and uneasiness, energies wasted, unprofitable sadness, the result of plodding care. But through this labour, this success, and this disappointment, every little friction discovers a glimpse of infinity to us, showing that we are of it and for it, and are only hindered from it by some trifling screen that separates us. The mines of Potosi were discovered by tearing a bush from the mountain-side. Similarly is our immediate future hidden from us, hidden till death removes the bush that intervenes.

Man is formed of two parts—the body which is of the earth earthy, and cannot think; and the soul, which is the life of the body so long as it is encased in it, and after that the real man. Our knowledge of the soul is necessarily indefinite; we cannot know anything apart from its present connection with the body. In its present state we find that it understands, wills, chooses, and refuses; and we infer that it has, by itself, the power to perform those acts. In governing the body it makes use of the forces of the body; but the essential principle of volition, we feel, belongs to itself alone. When the body is no longer capable of performing its functions in the natural world corresponding to the thoughts and affections of the soul, man dies, that is, the spirit is separated from the corporeal frame, which has become useless to it. The spirit which thought and directed lives, but no longer dependent on the body, or clogged by any forces that belonged to it. It is not in our power to say what the actual condition of the liberated soul may be. We find in the natural world that everything—vegetation, animal life, the formation of the earth itself—begins with crudeness and gradually completes itself to perfection, and this, we infer, must also be the order of the soul. Its separation from matter must therefore be to the spirit a step in advance.

But where does the liberated soul proceed to? To heaven at once, or to some intermediate state for further purification? On this point we can state nothing posi-

tively; it would be presumptuous to do so, since it is not from knowledge. But, as the final purpose of God must be to make us eternally happy, and as this purpose can only be attained by the full acquirement of both goodness and purity, and as it is evident that the best of men do not attain them fully in this world, the inference is irresistible that the spirit after liberation wanders through a middle state, in different grades of development, those only excepted, if any, which are able to attain the unison of purity and goodness at once. Our present life certainly determines our state in the next; but for all of us the next may not be the final state. We do not leave this world fully prepared for eternal life; it is doubtful if even the very best do so; and unless we are fully fit for it we cannot be admitted into it.

The drowning man may be saved by a plank or a rope, and such is the salvation that Christianity offers to us. But the position of humanity is not that of the drowning man, for it is a general, and not an exceptional position. All nature tells us that we must strike out and gain the shore. The design in respect to us is manifestly one of gradual elevation through higher and higher moral grades, till all that is crude and imperfect in us is perfected and matured. It necessarily implies the universality of final salvation. But that salvation must be attained, not merely given.

The present condition of our nature scarcely permits us to live such a pure life as would entitle us to this salvation at once. Our bodies are frail, mortal, and corruptible; requiring meat, drink, and enjoyment to support them. The virtues and necessities of a spiritual life being necessarily different, must require a different sphere of trial for their full development; the absence of an animal life seems almost indispensable to that development in its fulness; and till there is such development there can be no admission to unalloyed bliss. Sensualists and worldlings can be converted, bettered, and improved in this life; the slaves of pleasure may be awakened by reason; the lusts of the flesh may be avoided and partially conquered. But still

cannot man here be fully purified, for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and uncleanness to some extent is unavoidable. Our souls, we feel, are made for holiness and truth; they would choose no other enjoyment if they were not enslaved, clogged, and burdened by the flesh. As Christ Himself says, 'The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' The soul bent God-ward is untiring in its exertions to purify itself, but still cannot it be purified in this life; and as God is pure and iniquity unassimilable with Him, He can never be reconciled except to purity. He can be reconciled to sinners, but not to sin. Therefore to be saved it is essential that sin should be burnt up. So far as our knowledge therefore extends, a belief in an intermediate spiritual life seems to be the only solution of the difficulty. Our life on earth is given to train, not the body, but the spirit, for its eventual destiny. This training, we see, is not completed here. It may be that there are appliances in subsequent existences to complete it. Through how many such existences the trial may be continued it is not given to us to know; but we feel that it must be continued till it is completed to perfection: and this all nature indicates is the scheme of God.

All our inquiries only bring us to the verge of this world, when we part for the world unknown. But the condition in which we part from this world convinces us that there must be receptacles in the next for every differing grade of development for further expansion. God meant virtue to be progressive, nor virtue alone but intellect also; both to be perfected by trial and struggle. Step by step is the law of nature; the spirit mounts higher and higher after every conflict. Is the intellect that plays with the electric flash and forces it to perform its errands to stop there only? Is the capacity for improving the mind and purifying the heart exhausted in this life?

We do not see the end of development here; but it must have an end. For this creation we admire there must be a motive. If God be perfect the motive must also be

perfect, and must seek to confer the highest degree of welfare on each created being. That perfect power will carry out its perfect motive to perfect consummation must be a truism. We see God everywhere as perfect cause, as perfect providence, as perfect power, as perfect wisdom, and it is not possible that His perfect motive should not perfectly fructify. Our connection with the world ends here; the soul must therefore have a future sphere to right itself in for its final destination. The battered man of the world has as much right to look out for that destination as he who professes to claim it through the 'Blood of the Lamb;' the hero of a thousand hard-fought struggles may surely hope for it as well as he who exhibits the pouncet-box of Christianity as his passport to heaven. Death, as we know it, comes probably only as a change in the form of existence, and comes just when such a change is needed. Man is so constituted that in proportion as he verges to old age he verges again to infancy; and in that state innocence and wisdom are, to a great extent, conjoined: a state which must absolutely be the best to commence a new existence. The dying sinner may look to man to be deformed and offensive; but beneath the outward cover the power of truth and purity may have commenced to blossom; and it is only a natural inference that there is a sphere for the blossom to expand in. Why nip it in the bud to throw it into hell?

Our present life then is most probably but our infant-school, where the training is merely preparatory. We see that the training is not completed here; the results, in fact, far from being complete, are actually perplexing. There must be at least another school, therefore—probably several schools—for us to complete our training in. The Original Cause of all things must produce ultimates to correspond with its own nature, to give effect to its wishes. If God be perfect, the end must be perfect; if God be holy, the end must be holy; if God be good, the end must be good. There cannot be two ends—good and bad, unless we believe that there can be two Gods—God the good, and God the wicked. The divisions of humanity here are

three: the saint, the sinner, and the reprobate. It is barely possible that the saint may be saved immediately after death. For the sinner there must be further trial in a life where there are less temptations to unholiness than in this; and, though the lesson may be considered dangerous, our conviction is firm that the reprobate will not be given up, for God is good and one.

Then why is future life hidden from us? Who can answer that question? We do not know the character of that life, and perhaps man in the flesh would not comprehend it even if he knew it. What if the intermediate world for us be a spirit-world? The knowledge of such a world would necessarily be above our comprehension in our present condition, tied down as we are with material encumbrances. In fact, in our present condition, even the thought of it is fraught with fear to us, and only from our ignorance. Man feared the eclipse and the comet in past ages; even the voice of the storm, the glance of the lightning, and the shock of the earthquake caused alarm to him. With knowledge our fear of these has vanished; but of spiritual life we know nothing yet, and even to think of it very unduly taxes our judgment. But because we do not see it, nor know of it, nor can think of it, that is no reason for disbelieving in its existence. Many insects do not see man from the imperfection of their vision, and man, from similar causes, would not see spiritual beings even if he were surrounded by them. He might know them if an additional sense were given to him for the purpose, that is, if Providence wished him to know them; and, since we do not possess such a faculty, it is evident that Providence does not wish that we should know them.

Man is ignorant of his own spirit. Is it a wonder then that he is unable to intrude into the spirit-world? But the belief in that world has been almost universal even from the remotest times. We have had peris, angels, demons, spirits, and *dánavas* thrust upon us from the very dawn of history; and stories of the same nature are reported constantly to the present day, not only as parts

of a nice speculation, but of a theory widely entertained. The accounts of apparitions are frequent, though what their connection with this world is, we may not comprehend. We do not wish to believe that they are constantly going up and down, seeking whom to devour, for our faith in God's providence is so great that we think that to be absolutely impossible; but, at different times and from different directions, evidence has been pouring upon us from respectable eye-witnesses, which does not admit of being rejected, the whole tendency of which is to strengthen, not only the possibility, but the actuality of the existence of such beings. If they have any connection at all with us, it must be a permissive one. As God's stewards the good spirits may be around us to help us through our difficulties; and, in the same manner, permissively, bad angels may be at work about us as executors of God's judgment. But in neither case is there any particular reason for us to dread them; and, presumably, all spirits must be mainly busy with their own concerns, and not with ours.

This is spiritualism as we understand it. If it be not unreasonable to believe in it, it would follow in the nature of things for the spirit-world to contain both good and bad spirits, just as the natural world contains both good and bad men. As a rule we do not believe that any one can be admitted into final happiness immediately after death, either by his good deeds, or by mercy, or by faith. No one leaves the world in such a state of purity as to be able to claim final good on such grounds. Mercy only means the interest God takes in conducting us to eventual salvation, not the prompt condonation of our offences the moment we cry out, 'Lord! have pity on us.' Those are led on by mercy who do not live in evil. Those who live in evil cannot expect to be saved, and must be differently tried for the abandonment of evil. The good spirits would thus be undergoing further trial for complete purification; the evil spirits for retrieving their lost opportunities. There is no improbability in the idea of the infinite space before

us being peopled by them—peopled more thickly perhaps than the world we inhabit. The variety in the invisible world would necessarily be greater, not less, than the variety in the visible world. Unhampered by a clod of earth, all the souls liberated from this globe that have not attained the climax of purity may, in the spirit-world, be exercising their several virtues, or mortifying their several vices, apart from each other, and actuated by distinct feelings and forces. They are all invisible to us, and working invisibly; we neither perceive them nor the way of their working, except when, to serve some particular purpose of the Deity, they are made visible to or sensible by us. We do not want more intimate connection with them, for we are tethered to a material mechanism, to which such connection would not be beneficial. But nothing deters us from giving place to them in our reasoning, since our present existence without some such solution seems to be unmeaning and contradictory.

## CHAPTER VII.

### GOOD AND EVIL.

WE cannot infer the Infinite, and, not being able to do so, cannot explain the why and wherefore of everything we find in the world. Reason and conscience are very safe guides, but they do not unravel all the enigmas around us; and we conclude that it is not intended that we should be able to solve every problem in life. Looking about our little sphere from different stand-points, we come to decisions on diverse points almost diametrically opposed to each other. We are so differently constituted that even the good that has been given to us is not in every instance fully appreciated: how then shall we know what evil is?

There are philosophers of the age who speak with contempt of the pleasures of existence, and represent the world as being radically and necessarily bad; and not a few urge that pleasure is only a negative feeling—namely, the absence of pain. The pleasures of health are comprised, they say, in the absence of diseases, the pleasures of youth in the absence of age, the pleasures of freedom in the absence of slavery, the pleasures of wealth in the absence of poverty. The world, far from being the best, is with them the worst of all conceivable worlds, life being regarded as a continual struggle for existence, with the certainty of being beaten in the end. Any attempt to balance the pleasures of life only proves to them that pain is much the larger factor. Domestic happiness is illusion; the care and trouble of children far outweigh the pleasures

they afford; work is misery; they find nothing but anguish in every sphere of life.

Fortunately, this view of life is not the common one. Independent of utility there is a considerable amount of enjoyment or happiness in life, which is not generally ignored. As compared with the lower animals, the sensual pleasures of man are doubtless smaller in degree; but still are they pleasures to those who accept them as such. Almost the sole happiness of the brute creation consists in an ample supply of food, and, as there is abundance of this in the world, the evils they suffer bear no proportion to the good. Even in man's case the good things of life very much outnumber the evil things that beset him, and it cannot be gainsaid that he derives full enjoyment from the former, feeling pain only from exhaustion and surfeit. Food was a necessity to man, and had to be supplied; but how is it supplied? With a range of delicate variety that clearly testifies to the beneficence of God. The superfluity is so great that its object cannot be mistaken. The eye of the eagle is more piercing than man's, but takes no delight in the beauties of nature as that of man does; the nose of the dog smells better than that of man, but takes no pleasure in the odour of flowers; the appetite of all animals is stronger than man's, but taste belongs to man alone to enjoy what he devours. Variety alone is pleasure, and man has variety given to him in all matters with an unsparing hand. Is there a man who can take a rose in his hand, and feel aught but delight with it? Even the savage loves the flowers that bloom around him, but animals do not appreciate them. Health, youth, and freedom are all absolute pleasures, and not negative in their character; but besides them man has a variety of other enjoyments. The pleasures of literature, the sciences, and the arts are pleasures. Right conduct and just dealing are pleasures. Hope is a pleasure which never cloys, and to which we return again and again notwithstanding all the disappointments we constantly suffer. Contentment is a pleasure, a great and positive pleasure, though it does not show

itself broadly in that light. The deepest water is the stillest; the highest pleasures do not exhibit themselves. An arithmetical calculation of joys is therefore not practicable; there is no formula to indicate their extent. But there is no doubt that we are surrounded by them, that they are at least as positive as our pains and sorrows. Absolute happiness and truth belong only to God. Our happiness is in the desire of happiness and truth. Every struggle we make for the fulfilment of such desire is a pleasure; the pleasure is in the endeavour to secure the object aimed at. In this sense work itself is a pleasure; it imparts a feeling of consciousness and personality which fills our hearts. As we have stated already, we love life so much that we are exceedingly unwilling to part with it. This would not have been the case if the evils of life had been greater than the good bestowed on us. Pleasure carried beyond a certain degree becomes pain, no doubt; the fire that warms also burns: but because they glide into each other they must not be considered to be the same in character. Virtue merges into vice, but the things are nevertheless very distinct.

But pain exists—exists as a wonder that amongst so much happiness there should be a trailing serpent on the ground, whether it takes the shape of sickness, want, calamity, or discontent. It is certainly puzzling that the works of a good being should be in any respects marred, or apparently marred, by evil and unhappiness; and the mind staggers and doubts if the rule of Providence be always just. That disorders do befall to good men as often as to others, that the good are as great, or greater, sufferers than the bad, is not to be denied. Vice is exultant, virtue scorned; crime, envy, and unscrupulousness have plenty and comfort meted to them, while patient merit is immersed in helpless poverty, or otherwise laden so heavily that it cannot bear. The reason for all this irregularity is not explicable to us: but the world throughout, we see, is guided by an end; finality and design are marked in everything around us; we are led through all stages of our existence, almost with-

out our knowledge, to realize a plan; and if to us, who know so little, many things appear to be good and right, hy should the conclusion be difficult to arrive at, that when we see all we shall find everything fully justified? If even the truest and the best have their hours of darkness and affliction, is it too difficult to understand that that is only a part of God's scheme of education?

Any attempt on our part to criticise creation must be insufficient, because the human mind, not being universal, cannot compass the universal mind. We cannot enter into the purposes of God; we cannot expound His secrets: but from the good we see around us we may infer that evil itself may not be purposeless. If He has made ninety things for enjoyment and ten that cause misery, surely there must be an object in it, and that object a good one. We do not understand many things, and the existence of evil must be attributed to a plan which passes our comprehension. Apparently, the object of life is not merely to derive the greatest amount of enjoyment, though we are surrounded on all sides by pleasures. Life is the school of experience; where we have to work, to battle, and to strive. God is good, and all our inferences are towards good; but the existence of evil was perhaps necessary to strengthen our inclinations towards good. Sickness, sorrows, and troubles are levelling distinctions that every wise man expects as a matter of course, in a life constituted like the present. But are they evils in reality? Do we always accept them as such? A little thought often makes it plain to us that without them there would be no virtue in us, or the virtue in us would be mere untried metal, necessarily of doubtful value. If we did not suffer—suffer much and suffer long—what opportunity could there be for exercising such traits in our character as, for instance, patience and long-suffering, which are attributes even of the Deity? A world of ease, indulgence, and pleasure would very soon enervate even the best of us. Misfortune, then, may be but a beneficent principle, the whetstone of our virtues, that gives birth to

fortitude, patience, and hope of heaven. If salvation be the prize held out to us, is it not worth the buffets and wounds of the conflict? Erring does not confirm us in error; mistakes do not establish us in imprudence. If they lead to amendment and improvement, then are they not wholly profitless. If the presence of evil calls forth many things that are good, then is it sufficiently justified, sufficiently accounted for. How much should we be surprised one day to discover that but for this so-called evil, our final deliverance would perhaps never have been achieved?

Is that theory wrong which considers evil to be the means of good? We find this to be so in the physical world: is it untrue of the moral world? It may be that evil—the worst evil—is self-corrective, virtue the transmutation of vice, heaven the elaboration of hell. There is evil in life as there is poison in the physical world; poisons, we know, are beneficial provisions for disease; and so may evil be in the moral world. There are more antidotes than poisóns; and, similarly, the amount of enjoyment and happiness predominates. But He that works by the earthquake and the volcano, by the hurricane and the typhoon, must know also how to work with evil and pain. We see around us that life springs from death; we know also that evil calls forth many things that are good, which would otherwise not have been developed. Why then should the existence of evil be unaccountable to us?

Much of the pain and misery in life is our own act, resulting from the violation of the moral laws of nature. But even when it is not so, is there no vindication for their existence? The sensations of heat and cold, we know, are akin. A child, on ice being put into its hands, cries out 'Fire!' Wealth and want, pleasure and pain, often teach the very same lessons to the heart; and, if teaching be the object of life, the dispensation is only varied, not actually dissimilar. Trouble is a faithful dog that comes only to bring back the playing truant. The pain, the infliction, the bereavement, warn us of the loose screw in us, which if neglected, would place us in the mire. Pain is

warning, warning given to us in mercy. Every sigh, every tear, every groan, has its office to discharge, an end to accomplish. Courage; there are various kinds of it: but that is the greatest which can suffer. Is suffering still unaccounted for? Why not regard it as the helping hand of God that pulls us out of the mire?

God is love! We see floods and inundations devastate whole countries, earthquakes shake the earth to its foundations, cities and villages burnt down by volcanoes, millions of human beings destroyed by pestilence, ships sunk by tempests, populous regions buried under mountains of sands and ashes. These make the doubting mind hesitate; but with hesitation comes reflection, and with reflection the blaze of light. The convulsions of nature only make goodness more triumphant, each apparent evil producing lasting and incalculable good, every movement of seemingly uncontrollable rage an additional benefit to intelligent and sentient beings. Mark the thunder-cloud, how dreadful to look at! the trenchant lightning, what a thrill of fear it sends through the mind! the bolt of death, how awful! But what is the final result? Dispersion of noxious exhalations, purification of the atmosphere, the saving of many lives! The end of all revolutions, however destructive, is always a needful rearrangement of parts and things. The world is shaken from its centre to its circumference to create mountains, rills, and rivers. Physical pains, partial evils, always accompany such rearrangements in more or less degree; but only to bring on a much greater amount of pleasure and general welfare.

But could not the economy of nature have been better arranged? Why, under any circumstances should the good suffer and the bad triumph? These are questions which we cannot answer; that it is so is to us a sufficient justification of its being so. But if the good suffer there is always this qualification that it is the external retribution only that seems to be inexplicable, not the internal judgment. The good suffer outwardly, not in the mind; the bad triumph outwardly, but their minds are in such state

that they cannot exhibit them. As Theodore Parker puts it—'What if the Honourable Mr. Devil drives in his carriage and four? It is Mr. Devil still who rides in it, and never can his horses carry him away from himself.' In regard to bodily pain, we know further that when it grows beyond endurance it generally terminates in insensibility; besides which, the extremest punishments of this sort—bodily or mental—are often but the turning-points of salvation to us. God cannot take pleasure in our sufferings; He does not profit by them: it must be to our profit therefore that they tend.

The world as God created it is a good world; but the world as man has made it is very different. Actually we find it to be full of injustice, oppression, and cruelty; of treachery, falsehood, and hypocrisy; of pride, enmity, and strife; and of pain and anguish, as the natural result of these and other vices. But God will not permit His scheme to be upset; and pain and evil are therefore to be regarded, not simply as the result of our shortcomings, but as carrying with them the corrective principle also. God will not suffer men to undo what He has done. From out their evil doings He produces good. His hand is always active, and is a great deal more concerned in all that happens than the hands of men, or accidents, or fate. Every dispensation has an object, and, so far as we can read it, the object clearly is to produce light out of darkness, good out of seeming ills. Rest we content then with this conviction, since further we cannot raise the veil. Man by free-will has been made a responsible agent; but our belief is firm that under any circumstances his responsibility is very limited. Implicit trust in God, through good and evil, will carry us safely through the labyrinths we have to thread. Good and evil! No: it is a mistake to say so; it is good throughout, or rather the elaboration of good from evil by a process we do not comprehend. It is thus that we vindicate the ways of God in the world. We believe with Pope that 'Whatever is, is right.'

## CHAPTER VIII.

### FUTURITY, HEAVEN, AND HELL.

OF the future we know nothing, nor are we likely to know much for all our scrambles for information about it. The subject is nevertheless as legitimate a study for us as the past, even though it be one of which no personal knowledge can exist. It is often asserted that all the knowledge we have of it consists of what can be gleaned from the declarations of Christ; that it was all guess-work before, and would have continued to be guess-work still, but for His revelations. We do not understand this; we do not know what the revelations of Christ have established. If the future was guess-work before, it is guess-work yet for all the explanation He has given to us in regard to it. His speaking of the 'resurrection of life' and the 'resurrection of damnation' has not made either of them intelligible to us. If there be any explanation of the enigma anywhere it is in the pages of nature, which give us all the light God intended for us on the subject. Living we do not understand what life is: our journey begins without our willing it, and ends without our knowing anything about it. But we see through all nature that nothing is created in vain; nothing lost: and we reason from that that the life given to us cannot be lost by what we call death.

Humanity hopes for futurity, and that hope is a proof of it. The general desire and belief in a future existence which is largely implanted in us has not been called forth by us, and can therefore be accepted as having been given

to us for our guidance. There are hours in life of bitter anguish and utter desolation, when our heart-strings are snapped, and existence loses its value so much that, at the time at least, we really wish to die. But when man thus despairs what does he think of? Of futurity; still of life —a better life! This is the direct revelation that has been made to us. The hopes of no man die with him. To the last moment they remain as strong as in the beginning. We cannot therefore repudiate our belief in futurity even if we wished to do it. Why should the feeling be so strong if it were not well based?

The fear of annihilation is equally universal, and is another proof to us of futurity. Our strong love of life reconciles us, as a rule, to our sufferings; and small, very small, is the number of those who would not rather suffer on for ever and ever, than that life should cease. What are the grass on the meadow, the cedar on the mountain-side, the eagle in the air intended for? Perhaps for nothing more or less than what they seem to be—existences of the hour that cease when they die. We may be wrong in this supposition, for we judge only according to our light. We understand so little of the subject that strong reason will perhaps hardly justify us in insisting on a monopoly of futurity for ourselves. What we want to insist upon is this only, that if animals, trees, and vegetation be not immortal we do not sail in the same boat with them. Even the most fearful future does not create such alarm in our minds as the idea that we may cease for ever when we die, and this alarm, if heaven-implanted, must be an assurance that such cessation is not meant for us.

A third proof is the aspiration for knowledge implanted in us, which is not bounded by the earth. We find in ourselves desires which the world does not satisfy; powers fitted for the widest expansion; ambition to which no bounds can be assigned. Why were such gifts given to us if we were designed only for the brief existence allotted to us on the earth? Little seeds grow into trees, put forth leaves, produce blossoms and then fruits; but what were

the gifts given to us intended to produce, embellish, or feed? They do not develop themselves here, except to a very partial extent. Could such crude development have been intended or planned by a Being who exhibits no crudity in His general designs? Our knowledge of our soul is very indefinite; but the powers of the soul we can comprehend. Were those powers given only to be resumed?

But perhaps the best of all proofs of futurity is the existence of evil in the world. It is certain that nature is perfect, or it would have gone out of order. But evil still exists; therefore it is only means to a definite end. Cicero puts the case very strongly. 'When we find,' says he, 'benefactors of mankind like Orpheus and Socrates slain or oppressed to death by evil men, it becomes manifest at once that there must be a time and place apart from the present where the good will be rewarded and the wicked punished. The argument is simply unanswerable. We often see the best of men immersed in sorrows here for no fault of their own, and which no reparation that the world could make them would fully atone for. If this life were final, how could such dispensations be reconciled? It is against reason, therefore, to accept this life as final.

Life, then, is not dependent on common life, nor death on common death. They are both spiritual states of the soul. There is no rest in the universe; everything is in motion—ceaselessly. When the material life ends, moral life begins, and that also may be in perpetual motion. Every rank of creatures as it ascends the scale of creation, leaves death behind it. But still are we hastening to some end, though what that end is we may not fully understand. We call it futurity—a very indefinite term. What is futurity, and is it for both the good and bad alike? Revelation, where it has attempted to throw light on the subject, has made a mess of it. We want a better interpretation of the matter than Christ has given us. His interpretation, in fact, seems to us to be altogether against reason; and whatever is against reason cannot be reli-

giously true: for though religion may be larger than reason, yet it cannot be against reason, reason having been implanted in us to judge between truth and falsehood. The futurity we aspire to must be good, for God is good. Whether He is more just or more merciful, whether justice and mercy can be reconciled, are recondite subjects which do not call for immediate solution. He is good, He is just, He is merciful; and with assurances of these qualities in Him, we may rest satisfied that man was designed for happiness, and that his Creator will accomplish the design. But God being good, the extreme future can be good only for the good. For the bad what shall it be?

There is no doubt that we need an assurance of God being merciful. This is essential, because we are constantly erring. But for this no revelation is required. We see a design in the universe; we understand that we are made for a purpose. We see goodness everywhere; our weakness, therefore, cannot frustrate the object of the design. We know also that God is just; and, as we were called into existence at His wish, not ours, it would be unjust even for our defection—with free-will or no free-will—to send us to perdition. How then is the end to be obtained?

Christianity here steps in with its saving scheme. It is not, says the Christian apologist, to prove the existence of God, or the necessity of a moral or religious life, or the existence of a future state that Christianity was preached; but to secure salvation to the sinner through atonement. A sum of £1000, says the apologist, is owing from James to Peter; but James is insolvent, and would be put into imprisonment for life if Matthew did not pay the debt. When Matthew pays it, is not James absolved? Yes, indeed, he is, in a matter of £ *s.* and *d.*; but the case is not analogous to man's indebtedness to God. If the forfeit of non-satisfaction were the cropping of James's ears, Matthew's ears would not be the right equivalent.

Natural religion teaches us not only that God is, but

that He is just; the rewarder of them that seek Him, but not necessarily the punisher of them that seek Him not. For them that do well there must be glory, honour, joy unspeakable, and immortality; but not necessarily indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish for those who do evil. Natural religion does not speak of a furnace of fire, of wailing and gnashing of teeth. 'Depart ye, cursed, into everlasting fire,' is a Christian precept, irreconcilable as much with the justice of God as with the goodness manifest everywhere around us. His justice can cast us back into the nothingness from which we were created: but it cannot send us to perdition, for we did not bargain for it. If He did send us to nothingness, His object in creating us would not be attained, which is impossible. Therefore does mercy intervene between justice and its effect, mercy to him who is penitent and will react his part. The love of God is so manifest that utter annihilation, except to the obstinate, unrepenting sinner, is out of the question. Of all others the trial can only be prolonged--in the spirit when not in the flesh—till they are reclaimed. It would be too much to say that there can be unrepenting sinners to the end, that even the worst of men can by their persistent stubbornness make void the will of God. We believe this to be impossible; and we therefore conclude that the punishment of those so found wanting will consist in the indefinite postponement of happiness. We are predestined to eternal happiness. Our trials, both here and hereafter, are only delays to the attainment of it caused by ourselves. In the love of God is the source of true penitence, and it is possible that this love may be evoked from the hardest heart after a repetition of trials. The sinner may, and does, look to man as offensive and to be avoided. But does God regard him in the same light? Impossible: God cannot so abandon the work of His own will. He may and He does chastise us for them, but simply as the mother chastises her little ones for their naughtiness. He forsakes not; if He did forsake us, how could He be God? As the perfect and well-knowing cause, He knew from the

commencement how we would turn up, and provided fully for the contingency. He still designed us for final happiness, well knowing that it was not in our own power to frustrate His design. The evil of protraction of trial we bring upon ourselves by exercise of our free-will; error and sin bring on sufferings, till truth and purity are engendered; and when these bloom fully, we are redeemed.

But what if there be no repentance, no truth, no purity at any stage? Must there be no punishment even then? Yes, plenty of punishment; but the punishment is not from God. Hell, as a place purposely designed for punishment does not and cannot exist, because God is love, mercy, and goodness. A belief in such hell is simply a moral contradiction: it is too bad to be true. An everlasting punishment for a passing sin is out of all proportion to be just. If the hell of the Bible can be justified, why should the heaven of Mahomet be false? If sinners are to burn, why should not the blessed consort with *houris*? The hell that does really exist is that in each man's mind, which we all feel here in more or less degree, and which will doubtless become more troublesome to us in the intermediate life, or spirit-world. God is so good that He can condemn no one; we see in this life that even good men do not condemn their neighbours. But man, we see around us, is oppressed by a painful consciousness of his own sins; and it may be that when he is relieved of his material encumbrances this feeling will become yet more intense. Self-condemnation is therefore the hell we have to fear. The awakened heart punishes itself; more fully perhaps in the spirit-world than in this, because there no crimes can be concealed. Selfishness, vanity, double-mindedness, and lust, beholding themselves with disgust and horror, will there call upon immensity to cover and annihilate them. Rewards and punishments are not annexed, but involved. They are drawn out from our own acts themselves. The viper that stings is self-engendered.

The reward of virtue is eternal life. As the Bible has it, 'The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life;' 'The soul that sinneth it shall die.' Why do Christians misread these texts? Eternal life is a gift or reward only, not a necessary privilege for all; while death or annihilation is the sinner's meed. This death of the soul is real death. In the first death, or that of the body, the soul does not participate. In the second death it is the soul, and that only, that either *dies* or becomes immortal. An immortal duration is not natural to the soul, but a gift of God to those who deserve it; while those who do not deserve it first receive all the tortures that the consciousness of wickedness and impenitence can inflict on them, and then go back to the nothingness from which they were called forth; and this is the annihilation which our nature so instinctively abhors. We admit the possibility of such annihilation in theory only. Practically there can be no annihilation, we think, for any one; for God is not like the potter's boy who throws away the clay that will not make the vessel he wants to form with it. We do not think that God regards sin to be really so dreadful as we paint it. With Him it is perhaps no more than a mistake or error, a variance from nature and Himself. But variance against the Ultimate Cause cannot be permitted to hold on eternally. Therefore the inference is that no soul will be given up; no one will die. The means we know not, and can scarcely conjecture or conceive. But it seems certain that eventually all souls must and will be saved.

What is heaven then? Not a place set apart for the good, for in the end there will be none but the good to glorify God. Heaven is simply the final consummation of the great design, when God shall be all in all, while intermediately, each man's mind is to him at least a forecast of heaven—of the felicity in store for him. The mystery of God's government is not for us to read; we are groping in the dark; we want more light to lighten our understanding. But this we read clearly enough, that God is love, and not the vindictive being that an eternal hell would imply.

Even Atheism itself is better to believe in than a God so vengeful. All punishment is merely educational, and God cannot punish except for correction or prevention, in neither of which case can punishment be eternal. The theory of retribution, that punishment is inflicted because it has been deserved, is fiendish. As a human institution punishment for offences is necessitated by our helplessness; it is the only protection we have against each other. But that principle does not apply to our relations with the Deity. We believe in a good God, and a perfect God, and that the eventual end designed by Him must be both good and perfect, which necessarily implies the absence of eternal punishment. To give up even a single soul to perdition as being hopelessly and irreclaimably sinful would repudiate the Creator's own act in creating it and the whole tenor of His government, and we do not hesitate to scout the possibility of such an end.

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